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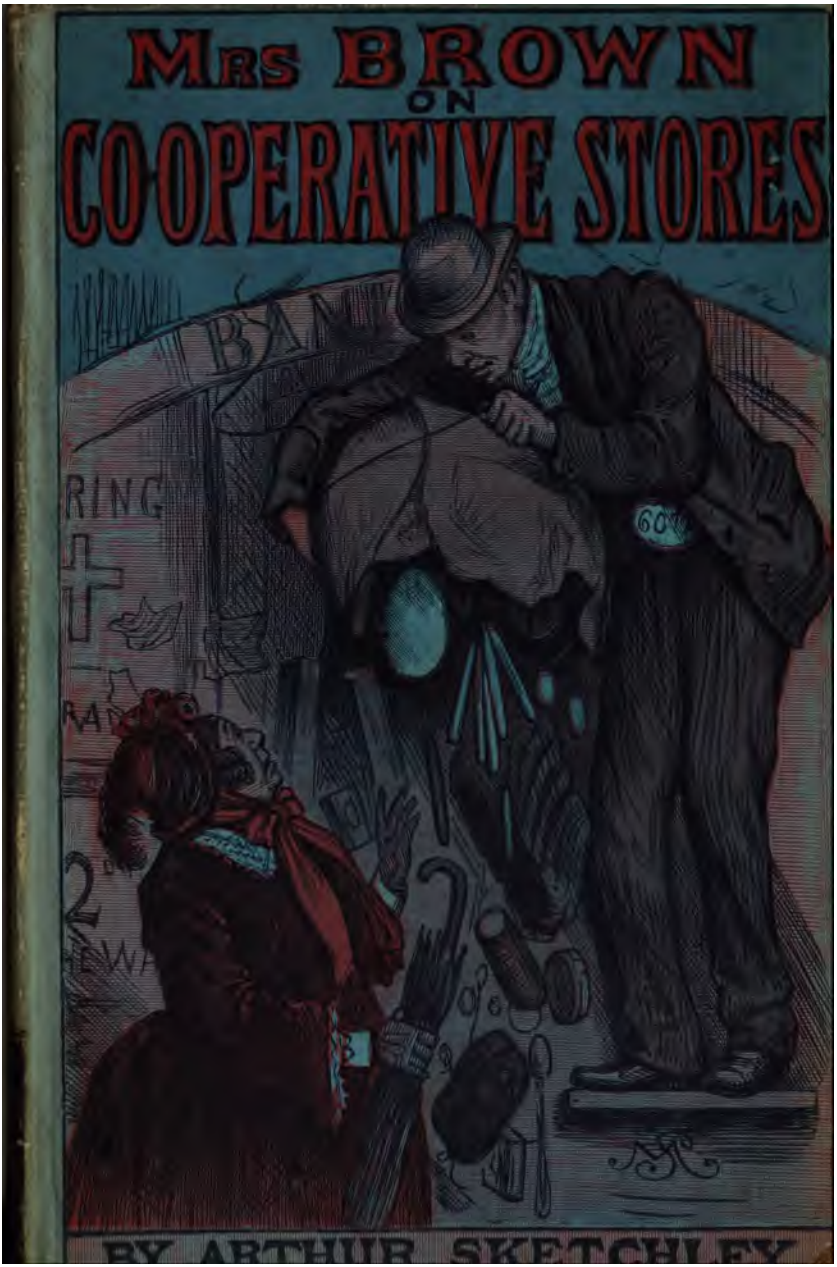
MRS BROWN ON CO-OPERATIVE STORES



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AUTHOR OF "MRS. BROWN AT THE SKATING RINK," "THE BROWN PAPERS," "MRS. BROWN AT BRIGHTON," ETC., ETC.

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MRS. BROWN ON CO-OPERATIVE STORES.

PREFACE.

It give me sich a orful turn the other arternoon, for Mrs. Sedley she come in all of a twitter, as brought me some things from the Corporation Stores, a-sayin' as she didn't know 'ow she'd ever got so far, thro' bein' that weak, and didn't know 'ow to bear up, thro' 'er boy 'avin' been drored for the militier, as she thought was a-goin' to be called out for to go to fight them niggers, as if not checked will be a-spreadin' theirselves all over the world.

So I says, "Never mind the Stores, but let me 'ear all about the boy; wotever makes you think as he's a-goin' to be drored, as must be foul play any'ow?"

She says, "I know as I'm rite, thro' my next door nayboor, as our gardins meets at the back, close agin where Woxall Gardins did used to stand, as

was once royal property, and she told me as 'er 'usbin, as is employed every day reglar at the seat of war, as is in Pall Mall, and run off 'is legs, as is reglar wore out, leastways one as is woodin thro' a-goin' all over the place all day, up and down stairs with them warlike messages, as the Dook of Cambridge is a-sendin' worretin' constant to Queen Wictorier, poor dear, as is all for peace and quiet, as is why she've been and went over to Italy, for to be out of 'is way, cos it's 'er dooty to make war on everybody, as, in course, bein' a lady she don't care to do with 'er own 'ands, no more than she would 'ang a man, as she must, but for Jack Ketch a-steppin' in, and," she says, "wot makes it more aggrawatin' is as it's all this 'ere Lord Bacinsfield, as is one as takes a pleasure in everlastin' rows, and that's wot William Gladstin complains on in 'im, as is like our Sarah, as in 'er dead sulks, won't up and speak out like a man, if she've broke anythink, as riles me, the same as poor old Gladstin, as it is well beknown as 'is temper is frightful." But in course he ain't to espect as Bacinsfield is a-goin' to show 'im 'is cards, cos he won't even tell Queen Wictorier 'erself wot is up, as 'ave been knowed to ask 'im wotever is the little game, and get nothink for a anser but a tap on the nose, and a wink, as I don't consider manners to a Queen, and wonder as she don't take and sack 'im for 'is impidence, but wotever is a

poor lone 'ooman to do, as can't see after everythink with one pair of eyes, as is why Mrs. Parker, at the "Catherine Wheel," took and married 'er cellarman under the year, cos he 'ad 'er under 'is thumb, as the sayin' is, not as anyone would dare to lay a finger, let alone a thumb, on Queen Wictorier, tho' no doubt she is worreted to death, wot with one thing and wot with another. Cos in course them lords and ladies as she've got all a-standin' round and waitin' about 'er, they're werry like them swell footmen as you sees behind the carridges, as looks werry grand, yet in the long run is more for ornyment than use; and as to them ministers, why, they're all more for preachin' than practisin'; and it must be werry tryin' for Queen Wictorier to 'ave to set for hours in them counsels and 'ave to listen to a lot of jaw all about nothink, and the same over and over agin, till 'er 'ead must ache agin. I suppose she don't care to change for fear as she would get a wuss lot; and as to 'avin' Gladstin back agin, why, he'd be wuss than ever, a-cuttin' and a-ackin' at the trees in the park, as is 'is only pleasure. Mrs. Sedley she were a-sayin' as there didn't ought to be no wars, nor yet sojers neither, as is always a sore pint with 'er, thro' 'er dorter a-marryin' a drum-major, as looked down on the family thro' bein' a officer. So I says to 'er, "Mrs. Sedley, mum, wotever would you do then to purtect

us agin these niggers, for I do believe as they'll werry soon overrun us and come and settle 'ere, and besides we shall want sojers soon to put down these 'ere strikes, as won't 'ear no reason. Cos as a party were a-sayin' to Brown—Strike but 'ear. I says rubbish, don't strike not 'ere, or anywhere's else, as is foolishness, and only brings misery, as will end some day in bloodshed."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Sedley, "it's werry orful to think of all them fine young fellers cut off in their primes, jest for all the world like buds by the frost."

"Yes," I says, "bless their noble 'arts, dear fellers, as I feels like a mother to 'em all, and made my heart bleed to read about it, but," I says, "wot can you espect from niggers?"

"Yes," says Mrs. Sedley, "and all this fightin' for what?"

"Well," I says, "if you could persuade everybody to set at 'ome and starve, why, then we shouldn't 'ave no call to go to them forrin' parts; but," I says, "as Brown were a-remarkin' the other night over supper, it's the same game as Julia Seizer over agin, as couldn't rest at 'ome, but must go a-fightin' and a-conkerin' agin and agin, like 'arts of hoaks are our ships and jolly tars are our men, as a uncle of mine would set and sing to you till you was reglar deaf, and the tears come

in your eyes, as I do believe made 'is wife that 'ard of earin', as you might fire a loaded pistol right into 'er 'ead, and she'd never 'ear it."

"Ah! but," I says, "you're right, wars is orful things, partikler civil wars, where you're all friends one minnit, with the poker and tongs at your 'ead the next, the same as some families as I knowed as never could meet even for a funeral or a christenin' but there'd be war to the knife, as the sayin' is, up to the 'ilt." Not as I ever cares for them family parties, as is all lovin' one minnit and manslaughter the next, for wotever else can you make it, when five of one family comes to jump on the father, with the mother 'oldin' on by 'is 'air, as it's a mussy he was nearly bald, or she'd 'ave 'ad every morsel out by the roots, as is painful when took by the 'andful, as is wot Mrs. Childers did by 'er brother-in-law, when the boat upset, and would 'ave saved 'im if he 'adn't slipped thro' 'er fingers thro' wearin' a wig, as in course come off in her 'and, and he was swep' under a coal-barge, as sucked 'im in, and must 'ave been drowned like a dog if the bargee 'adn't 'itched 'im by the seat of 'is pants, and brought 'im up nearly pisoned with Tems water, as wos jest the spot where the coal refuse was throwed out, as killed a dog as went in after a stick. But, law, bless me, every man as is a man, tho' only a wolun-

teer, would in course go to fight them beastly savidges."

"Ah," says Mrs. Sedley, "but only think about taxes bein' all rose. "Well," I says, "it's always been the same as long as I remembers—war or no war, Wigs or Tories—the same song we must pay."

"Yes," she says, "but think of the espence of all them sojers livin', with their boots and shoes and all found."

I says, "They must all live some'ow, so it don't much matter in the long run; but," I says, "it's not only the sojers, but it's the sailors and all the rest of the British constitution, from the perlice downwards, as runs away with the money afore you can turn round; and of course there must be pretty pickin's for some on 'em, and that's 'ow the world goes on. We're jest like the beasts of prey as lives on one another, leastways that's wot Brown makes on it, as is a man as thinks a deal, and reads too; not as he lets 'isself be led by the nose, nor by no noospapers, and can argue too, thro' 'avin' of 'is 'ead screwed on the right way, and in general shets up anyone in a argyment; only give 'im time, as ain't one to anser off'and, but takes 'is time to think afore he speaks."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Sedley, "the more you thinks the more you puzzles yourself over them

things, as is beyond your comprehenshun, for," she says, "I can't sleep of a night for thinkin' of them dear brave fellers as was swep' away by that river over in Injier."

"Ah!" I says, "that was a wicked shame, cos it isn't as if they'd been and crossed of their own wills, but the word was give, and in course in they plunged like true Britons, a-doin' of their duty."

"Yes," says Mrs. Sedley, "and wot an orful waste of their clothes and 'orses, as all must cost money."

I says, "Oh! bother the money, think of their dear lives, as was, I dare say, as 'ansome a set of young fellers as you'd see in a day's walk, as I must say I can't 'elp a-turnin' round to look at myself in the park, tho' it's a thing as I'd check any dorter of mine a-doin', cos tho' nat'ral it's dangerous, and 'ave broke many a poor gal's 'art."

"Yes," says Mrs. Sedley, "it's my opinion as it would be better not to 'ave a standin' army, as is always a-loafin' about the place."

"Well, as to that," I says, "certingly; for in course it stands to reason if wars is bad things, so must sojers be jest the same as famin and pestilence, as the sayin' is, but necessary evils all the same, the same as servints, as 'ave become a downright plague of your life, and makes you sigh for to

think of the time when there was slaves with a word and a blow, and the blow come first, as the sayin' is." Not as I sees any difference myself between bein' obliged to do a thing, whether it's a cat-o'-nine tails or 'unger, as is a sharp thorn, as drives you to it in the long run, cos in course nobody wouldn't be such a fool as to work as could live without it; for in course we should all like to be lords and ladies a-ridin' about in carridges all day long! not as they're all on 'em 'appy, but often takes to drinkin' for want of somethin' better to do, as shows as idleness is a cuss, disguise it as you will; but as to bein' disguised in licker, as the sayin' is, I'm sure I can't think 'ow any lady can stoop to it, as is a wile 'abit; but as to set with my 'ands afore me any time, why, I couldn't do it was it ever so, no more than Mrs. Padwick, as 'ave took to nettin' in the evenin' of 'er days now as 'er eyes aint up to fine work, as you can keep on with even between the lights. But as to slaves, I've 'eard say as them Affgangs is wuss than negro blacks, and them Zulus no better, as is 'ard enuf to conker thro' their woolly 'eads bein' that thick as you can't 'ardly get a comb nor yet nothink thro' 'em; tho' in course a cannon-ball wouldn't stop to get thro' no wool nor 'air neither, but would take and send the 'ole lot a-flyin', like a wig, as is wot did ought to 'ave been done with these 'ere Zulus long ago, as in

course aint no better than 'eathen 'Ottenpots, as is where the Wenus come from, as were showed in London when I were quite a gal, as I've 'eard parties say were a disgustin' sight, and didn't never ought to 'ave been allowed, as aint no way to civilize savidges to show 'em off in all their naked deformities, as the sayin' is, as deserves to be pitied like the sheep over there as can't bear their own tails, as didn't make theirselves any more than camels or drummyderries, as is 'ump-backed from their birth, and in course nat'rally defends their native 'ills, the same as we should, cos it's all werry fine talkin' about goin' among savidges to do them good, as is all pickles, as the sayin' is. Wot we goes among them savidges for is to best 'em out of their goods, as we calls commerce, and a nice set goes after that game in a gen'ral way; a lot of rogues and cheats, as a many on 'em will sell the savidges the werry arms as they wants to kill the Inglish with. Cos in course with all this free trade all over the world we sells everythink, to everybody, whether they wants the things to cut our throats with or not. I aint no patience with such rubbish, and my principles is let every one look out for 'isself, and leave 'is nayboor to do the same. I reglar 'ates all the cant and rubbish as is talked about progress and thought, and all the time people is a-gettin' wilder and wickeder in their ways, and the gals and boys

that cheeky as they won't be spoke to, and as to gals takin' adwice, why, they turns you into redicule for offerin' of it; the same as that young thing, Melia Butlin, as were a mother afore sixteen, in spite of all the warnin's as I'd give 'er over that grocer's boy, as wasn't eighteen 'isself, and nice parents, as nearly cost 'er 'er life, and 'im in a gallopin' consumption, as goin' a sea-woyage didn't save 'im, and 'eard of 'is death when 'er child were a week old, and as fine a infant as ever was seen, as come to me and said as she'd work for it till she dropped, if it was only for poor Joe's sake, as 'ad acted 'onerable and took 'er to church and made 'er 'is lorful wife the day afore he sailed, as was 'is mother's doin's, as said he was to do 'is dooty by 'er; but, as I said, wotever is the use of lettin' young people run wild like the beasts of the fields as perishes, and no morals, nor yet decency, as is wot even naked savidges won't allow, as aint no religion; jest the same as Louisa Bellers, as lost 'er mother thro' drink, and when I went over to see 'er, the day arter the funeral, and says to the gal, "Well, my dear," I says, "you must keep up for your father's sake; and as to your poor mother, let's 'ope she's gone to a better world, with all 'er errors looked over."

"Oh!" she says, "she hadn't no errors be-

yond a drop too much to drink, as aint no sin; and as to a better world, that's all 'umbug." t give me sich a turn to 'ear a gal of 'er age talk like that; so I says to 'er, I says, "Louisa, your's is the words of ignorance, my poor gal, cos, 'owever can a poor, ignorant young thing like you set yourself up to say as things like that is 'umbug." I says, "It's all pride, as goes afore distraction." I says, "Your mother 'ad 'er failin's, and neither you nor me is 'er judges, so let 'er alone; and," I says, "as to what is to come arter this life, the most as parties like you and me can say, is thro' bein' that dreadful ignorant we can't say nothink about it." Not as I wonders at them poor gals and boys bein' no religion, for, wot with one set of men a-preachin' one thing, and another set another, and then the Bible-woman, and then the City Mission, and then the ladies round with tracts, all a-sayin' different things, why, it's enuf to puzzle a conjuror, and that's 'ow it is as there's so many as don't believe nothink, and never enters a place of wuship except afore a perlice magistrate; for I've 'eard say as there's thousan's upon thousan's of them poor as gets their livin' in London as don't pertend to be no religion at all, and yet don't go a-murderin' and butcherin' innercent parties, like them French with their Commune and their pertrolium, as they're a-goin' to let loose all over the place for to repeat them

games. But in course them Red Republicins is all in the same boat with Mr. Gravy, and that there Gambetter, as 'ave got 'is weather eye up, as is all mild now; but jest let 'im get to be 'ead, and then you'll see 'ow pretty sharp he'll take and turn on them as kicks up rows in the street, a-breakin' of the peace, as is all thro' them pollyticks, as the French is so fond on, with their 'apenny papers; and talk of edication, I'm sure it's a pity as a good many of 'em ever learnt to read, as fills their 'eads with rubbish, and is the destruction of servint gals with their "Bow Bells," and their "Family 'Eralds" and "London Journals" all over the dresser, when they did ought to be mindin' the jinte; and as to the bastin'-ladle, it's the last of their thoughts, with a coal in the drippin'-pan as reglar stifles the 'ole house, let alone the meat bein' burnt up outside to a cinder and raw at the bone, as can't make the sweeter the meat, as the sayin' is. I'm sure the rubbish as is talked about edication as never yet made a fool clever, and them as is clever naturally in course don't want it; cos, look at them savidges, they're sharp enuf, and don't want us to go and show 'em the way 'ow to lie and cheat more easier; as can rob quite quick enuf, and yet 'aven't no banks to be Directors on, nor yet no other swindles, sich as sham companies and beggin'-letter imposters, nor yet noosepapers, to say black is

white one day and white is black the next. I'm sure the way as parties talks about improvin' the 'eathens, you'd think we was all up to the knocker 'ere, and there wasn't no murderin's of mothers, of fathers, nor ill-treatin' wives; and then parties a-'ritin' about not 'angin' a willin for murder, as is not so good as a wild beast; like that young Treadway, as was commuted into penal servitude for life, as will be out agin in twenty years, as will be the prime of life, and ready to murder some one else, with the same escuse made for 'im as 'is grandmother's aunt's 'arf-sister was subject to fits, as 'ad shook 'is reason, and, as Brown says, all the more reason to 'ang 'im and put 'im out of 'is misery. I aint no patience with sich 'umbug; and as to juries, the sooner as they're put down the better, if they ain't no use, but gives the noosepapers the trouble of tryin' them murderers over agin. Talkin' of savidges, one day there were one of them mishunary parties come in to me a-talkin' about the noble savidge. I says, "Pickles! Noble, indeed, a set of idle waggerbones as ill uses the women and poleaxes their old parents." Not as we must talk much about that, for some parties 'ere in London knocks their old mothers about, and then strangles 'em, and I 'ave 'eard speak of a party as turned 'is mother out of the 'ouse, and sent 'er to the workus to die, and when the Guardians come and talked to

'im a-sayin' as they could make 'im support 'er, if he didn't take and prove as she wasn't never 'is father's lawful wife, tho' the mother of seven children as she'd brought up decent, poor soul, as was werry common people in the beginnin', but this ere son 'ad made a deal of money, and then to turn on 'is own mother like that, as did ought to be a warnin' to parties not to live that disreputable, tho' that poor woman told me 'erself with 'er dyin' lips, when I went to see 'er in the workus the night as she died, that she was married over in Ireland to the father of 'er children by 'er own priest, but it wasn't legal thro' the man bein' Inglish and a Protestant while she were a Catholic, as did used to be the law then, tho' I believe as it's changed, and 'igh time too; not but it come 'ome to that son, for he 'ad only one boy, as were like the apples in 'is eyes, and if the poor dear child wasn't burnt to death the werry day the old woman was laid in 'er grave, as would 'ave been a pauper's funeral, only some of them as went to the same chapel, and 'ad known 'er when she was in better days, they clubbed together with a few friends, and 'ad 'er berried decent. I see 'er beast of a son reglar black from top to toe, jest arter the poor dear little boy were burnt; he come into my place to ask wot expenses there was over 'is mother's funeral as he called Mullins. "So," I says, "are you a-talkin'

about your mother, Mr. Smears ?" as were 'is father's name. He said, "He didn't want any discussions on family matters." So, I says "No more don't I; but," I says, "if 'er name wasn't Smears then yourn can't be; and if 'er maiden name was Mullins, that's the only name you've got." He drored 'isself up, and says, "I ain't a-goin' to attempt to argue with an ignorant person; I only want to know what 'as been paid for that poor woman's funeral," and he pulled out his portmoney. I says, "Wotever was paid ain't no concern of yours, as nobody as berried 'er wouldn't touch your money, and all the 'arm I wish you is that when your turn comes to be laid in the grave there may be some one to foller you, if your own flesh and blood shouldn't care to do it." He turned pale, and said, "That woman's habits was that low as he couldn't 'ave 'er near 'im." "Ah!" I says, "but she wasn't too low to nuss you and work for you when a boy, as 'ave seen 'er myself toilin' like a negro slave at the mangle." He says, "You know 'er 'abits was that bad." "Now," I says, "I won't stand that." I says, "If you thought it your dooty to turn 'er out of doors, well and good, but don't take away 'er character now as she's in 'er grave and can't defend 'erself, but I can declare as she were a 'ardworkin', decent, sober woman all the time as she lived in this street, as were over nineteen year, and would

'ave worked for 'er bread till the day of 'er death but for roomatics a-settlin' in 'er backbone, as drored 'er that double, poor soul, as she couldn't straiten 'erself, not even with shrieks, as you could 'ear 'arfway down the street, and frightened Mrs. Weldin's donkey as were a-standin' at the door a-goin' to take the linen 'ome one Friday arternoon, and took and bolted with the lot, as he run into a bus with in the Bow Road, and not even a slip siled, as is a wonderful thing, and only a pair of stockins as was rolled under the wheel, as it's a mussy it wasn't fine things, as would 'ave took and fluttered all over the place and some on 'em been blowed into the gasworks and burnt up, the same as poor Mrs. Buntin's weeds and bonnet a-walkin' by Stepney Green, the day arter she berried Buntin, as died frightful 'ard, poor fellow, thro' the water a-settlin' on the chest, as was wondorful, seein' as it was a thing he never touched by itself, and werry little on it any way, esceptin' tea, as he never took without sperrets, for to correct the norin' as he said it give 'im at the 'art if took alone, but eat away all the coats of 'is stomach as ended in dropsy. Not but, in course, Mrs. Buntin were 'rong in walkin' with 'er umbreller up, 'eld straight in front of 'er to keep off the wind, as the pint of the ferrel took a elderly Quaker in the pit of the stomick as were a-meetin' 'er full butt, readin' of a

track about the Peace Society, as 'olds as there didn't ought to be no war, but as we did ought to set still and let Rooshins or Prussins or 'Merrykins or niggers, or any one come an bully us and take away our things, as in my opinion is jest the same as free trade, as would be all right if everyone was to agree to it all over the world, but not let forriners send all their goods to us dooty free, and then make all our things pay 'eavy dooty a-goin' in to forrin countries. Mrs. Buntin told me as she shouldn't like to take 'er oath to it, but it's 'er opinion as that Quaker swore frightful, and give 'er umbreller that wiolent wrench as it tore off 'er bonnet with 'er weeds tacked in as was fastened to 'er front; so the 'ole bag of tracks were bore upon the breeze, as the sayin' is; not as she did ought to 'ave forgot the lady so as to 'ave butted at that Quaker with 'er bald 'ead in the stomick, like a Dutch cheese, as reglar doubled 'im up, and was black in the face when picked up, and didn't come round for ever so long. But, dear me, wot a cold she cort, as I thought would 'ave ended in airysipilis, poor thing, as is a nasty disorder, and if it touches the brain settles any one's ash in a brace of shakes, the same as poor Mr. Bluet's legs, as was certingly brought on by drink, tho' she tried to stand me out as he'd been a Good Templar over two years, as is total abstainers from all liquids, or as they calls 'em

fluids. I didn't care for to contradict 'er, but says to myself "Walker," thro' 'avin' met 'im myself full butt a-comin' on the sneak out of a pub close agin where Mile End Gate did used to stand, as said he'd been in to look at the clock, and smelt that strong of peppermint, as he showed me he carried the drops in 'is westcit pocket, thro' bein' frequently took that bad in 'is breath, thro' meetin' the wind all the way from Algate Church, as I could detect there were a under current of rum all the time, as is ways I don't like, cos everyone did ought to be open and above-board. Not but wot some Good Templars is Good Templars all round, and sticks to their colours, as is true blue; the same as them dear fellers among them Zulus, as was reglar lions, and wouldn't never give in, as it seems a shame to waste sich noble creeturs on killin' them savidges, as might be done by machinery, like the thrashin' machine. Not but wot I always agrees with Brown in sayin' as them savidge wars is like goin' a-shootin' tigers; if you likes the sport, you must look out for squalls. Not but wot I 'oners them brave sojers, as goes at the call of dooty, ready to die cheerful; not as I should care to be ordered about by old fogies, as I never did think much on, as I've 'eard a deal about, thro' parties as knowed 'em in Injier; not but wot some does their dooties there,

as is wot Ingland espects of every man, like Lord Nelson sung out with 'is last breath, a-dyin' in the arms of wictory. 'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay, as is near the same spot where he stands on that there column in Trafalgar Square, as did used to be the King's Mews, and must 'ave been water there once, cos I well remembers a skelinton of a gigantic wail did used to be there, as they said 'ad been stranded close by; and, in course, in old times the river did used to wash up all sorts of things, as is why they come to embank it, for to make it keep its place, as is wot a many more wants bein' made do, partikler young people, as is a deal too forard; not as I'm one to snub them as is young, but likes 'em to be'ave becomin' to their elders; but, law bless me, there's sich a many old fools about nowadays, as no wonder they ain't treated with respect; like Mrs. Ribbles, as says she were married at sixteen, as I considers gammon, and now is nearer fifty than forty, with a son past thirty, if she ain't a-goin' to marry a feller of one-and-twenty, as, in course, will lead 'er the life of any dog, and serve 'er right, a old fool; the same as old Lamplin, as were over sixty, and took and married a gal out of a refreshment-bar, as was only jest eighteen; not as I've got anythink to say agin refreshment-bars, as is a great convenience, and I'm sure some of them young ladies that elegant, with 'ands like armons for

whiteness, and their 'airs done like any princess, and that genteel of a Sunday, as 'ave been took for nobility a-walkin' in Greenwich Park, as were where old Lamplin met that young fieldmale, as 'ad words with 'er young man, and parted in a 'uff, and never thought as it were the last time, but she took and married old Lamplin within a fortnight, and went off with a artilleryman under six months, and died in Lambeth Workhouse, all thro' 'er own fault, as might 'ave kep' 'erself respectable, and 'ave rode in 'er own Wictorier, like two of the young ladies as stood at the same counter, and neither on 'em as good-lookin' as 'er. And as to poor old Lamplin, 'is gout flew to 'is stomick, as was always 'is weak point, as ended in dropsy. But as to marryin', it's the course of natur, no doubt, and so in course we must all come to it; leastways, except them as is old maids and old bachelors, as is in general a selfish lot, and lives to be a noosance to theirselves and others; cos, in course, blood is thicker than water, as the sayin' is, and when you gets old, your own children will stick to you; but as to strangers, wotever can you espect? Tho' I 'ave knowed them as 'ave done their dooty, tho' they was only servints. But it's a 'ard world, and werry few on us does as we'd be done by, like young Pelfer, as were a gasfitter, and picked up a infant as 'ad been laid by its wretch of a mother,

one bitter cold night, on 'is door-step, as was only a bedroom as he 'ad over the workshop; and the poor little dear were nearly froze to death, as was nearly two in the mornin'; and if he didn't get it a drop of 'ot milk at a coffee-stall, and take it into 'is own bed, as I 'oners 'im for it; and though parties might jeer at 'im, I says, "Never mind, Sam"—for he brought it to me the fust thing in the mornin'; "if you'd been the Prince of Wales, you couldn't 'ave acted more nobler; and," I says, "it will come 'ome to you." He says, "Well, I don't want no more in this way." But it turned out well, for 'is own sister 'ad jest berried 'er infant, as was only four months; and if she didn't take to that there poor little fondling jest the same as if it 'ad been 'er own, and would 'ave fretted if it 'ad died under the twelvemonth the same as if it 'ad been 'er own flesh and blood as she were a-berryin', as always comes 'ome to a mother's 'art, as will feel as much for a infant under the month as if it 'ad been Daniel Lambert or the Norfolk Giant, as, in course, was both infants once; not as I 'olds with monstrosorties myself, and am thankful as none of mine wasn't born prodigals of size, nor yet beauty neither, as is only skin deep; and many a one 'ave 'ad cause for to repent bein' that lovely; not as I ever will believe as Miss Partridge ever were, tho' she does say as crowds did used to foller 'er, with 'er 'air in

ringlets down 'er back, as were allyblaster, as the Turks calls it, for whiteness, as must 'ave been born crooked, and no kite's foot weren't never yallerer than wot she is now; and as to 'er 'air, she ain't got enough in 'er 'ead to 'old a 'air-pin, with a 'air lip and a swivel eye, as she says were all brought on by a damp bed arter the scarlet fever, as throwed it in, and made 'er outgrow 'er strength, and will 'ave it as she growed two feet in a fortnight, and 'ad five offers afore she were sixteen, and might 'ave been a-ridin' in 'er carridge now, only she wouldn't stoop to a widderer, as took to drinkin' for 'er sake, as only shows wot you may take and fancy; for I 'ave 'eard she was a objec from the month, and 'er own mother said as it would be a mussy if she was took, tho' I 'ave knowed mothers fret terribly arter a 'ump-backed idjot, as is only nat'ral.

But really I do 'ope as we shan't 'ave many more wars, for there's no livin' with Brown arter supper, when he's been and read 'is papers, cos he says as we're gettin' to be downright bullies, as is in general a sign of bein' a coward, as no true born Briton never were, from Julia Seizer downwards; but some'ow Brown never did fancy this fightin' naked savidges, as in course aint no match for grape-shot nor yet bagginets, but I says, it's the way of the world; but wot Brown says is that it is such rubbish our talkin' about our civilization and

Christianity, when we're as big savidges as the rest, and you 'ear parties a-talkin' about nothing but awengin' our wrongs on our enemies. Not as Brown's sich a fool as to say wot did ought to be done, cos in course not bein' on the spot, 'ow can he know 'is way about so well as them as is up to their necks in the row; but some'ow he never did relish that war; and as to Bartlemy Fair and Lord Chemsford there must 'ave been a deal of false'oods told about 'em, one way or the other, for it was only the other day as everybody was a-sayin' as the best thing as they could do would be to take 'an 'ang theirselfs for the benefit of their families; and now they calls 'em reglar Neros. One of them Bishops as is out there, says as King Chittywyo is a lamb for peace, as you might trust 'im with a new born babe, and jest like Queen Wictorier's own brother in 'is ways—as may be a kiddin' that there Bishop all the time. But of all the kid as ever were read about, as made Brown reglar larf out, it were that old Grabidaldi, a-comin' the artful to get into Rome, a-pretendin' as he were that bad as he'd only come there to die, cos of course he knowed if he'd come a-dashin' in on 'orse-back with any of 'is bounce, they'd 'ave took and turned 'im back; and as to that there King Umbug a-comin' down that civil for to receive 'im at the door, all the while a-wishin' as a bullet 'ad been put thro' 'is 'ead

instead of thro' 'is ancle that time as they shot 'im down when they'd made their own use of 'im; cos they knows, as in course, he 'ave come to stir up a red republic in Rome, as will send King Umbug a-flyin', only no doubt they'll keep a sharp look out, and try to let the Ostrians ketch 'im, as will 'ang 'im up to the fust tree. Cos he can't run away as fast as he did used to be able to.

It's nice lives, and not be 'unted like a strange cat out of a Palace, as some Kings and Queens leads now-a-days, as would rather live in the Seven Dials myself, as may be all werry well for them as is used to it, but wouldn't suit me nor Brown neither, as is quiet folks, and likes our own quiet ways, an meals early and reglar, with no kickshaws, but plain roast and biled; not as I minds a Hirish-stew, nor yet a stewed steak if done proper, and a toad-in-a-'ole aint a bad thing of a cold day, as saves trouble, partikler of a Sunday, and you don't 'ave the taste of the oven so strong, as in my opinion spiles every one's jinte as aint pork; so in a gen'ral way likes a cold dinner better than a baked one, partikler in summer, not as I 'olds with salids escept when the lettices is all 'art, and then werry little winegar, and the ile no taste in it.

I do 'ope, when we've wopped them niggers, as old Bacinsfield will take and make peace with 'em; not but wot Brown thinks as there'll be a row over

Egypt, as he will 'ave it we means to annex, as will bring on words with France, not as we need care about old Gravy, as were a tailor, I've 'eard say, and married 'is cook, and in my opinion showed 'is taste if she were a good one; but do 'ope as Queen Wictorier won't let 'erself down for to receive sich parties, not as that King and Queen of Italy is much account; but, law, everythink is upside down now-a-days. But I 'ope as they won't go a-marry-in' that there dear young Princess Beetreece to none of them Italians, nor yet Kaffirs, for I can't a-bear none of them forriners, and I'm sure that King Umbug, he looks for all the world like a Zulu with 'is 'air cut short, in a suit of clothes as don't fit 'im well, for I see 'im myself when I were over in Italy, a-orseback; and as to 'is father, he was a reglar old savidge to look at. But if the Italians likes them wild ways, why, in course it's no busy-ness of mine, nor yet nobody's elses, as is wot Queen Wictorier said, no doubt; and so let 'em do as they pleases, so long as they don't bother 'er, as is why she went there incogniter, as means unbeknown. It's a lovely spot where she's been a-stayin', and 'ave no doubt done 'er a lot of good; and I'm sure it's mussy as she didn't stop 'ere, for the weather's been that beastly, and I'm sure them Italians would be dead in no time with coughs and colds if they was 'ere; but use is second natur, as the sayin' is, and we're

used to it, and I do believe as a good cough does you good, only you did ought to live well and be kept warm, as is 'arf the battle of life, all said and done; and there's a-many one as ain't reglar starved to death is wore out with 'ard work and short commons, and all the world is that greedy as they won't live and let live, but they must all be a-tryin' to get the bread out of one another's mouths; and so it is as some is starvin' and others 'ave got too much, and for my part I never can make out wot parties is all a-drivin' and a-strivin' to make fortunes, as they can't never live to spend, nor yet take with 'em, and only leaves it behind for their children and grandchildren to make ducks and drakes on, as would 'ave been far 'appier if they'd 'ave 'ad to work for their bread, for there's many a one as is now always a-ailin' and a-pinin', with the doctor never out of the 'ouse, as would be strong and 'arty if they had to live on a shillin' a day and earn it, cos 'arf parties' illnesses is brought out by 'avin' too many of the good things of this life, so over-eats and drinks theirselves, as underminds their 'ealth, cos the 'umin stomick, tho' a willin' 'orse, as the sayin' is, can't be drove tho' it may be led; and no doubt parties can bring theirselves to eat a deal more than natur requires, as is all done with them sauces and pickles, and 'ot things, as will purwoke a false appetite, as is more easy managed now as

parties can 'ave false teeth, tho' I remembers well when I were quite a child, afore false teeth were invented, there was a old lady as could eat cracklin' with 'er gums—ah! and crack a nut, too—but she died thro' somethink a-goin' rong with 'er diagram as acts on the stomick the same as a safety-walve, as purwents a steam-ingin from bustin' up; but for my part I says it's best to enjoy your wittles, and not want them pickles and relishes, as 'unger is the best sauce, tho' a sharp thorn, but it's better to 'ave a good appytite and short commons than to 'ave your table a-groanin' under the wittles and not be able to pick a bit; not but wot I've knowed parties as gammoned a good deal over their meals, and only took a bit there and a bit 'ere, as 'ad 'ad a jolly good meal on the quiet. Not as I ever likes to see a fieldmale a-eatin' like a navvy, as 'ave been knowed to eat a leg of mutton down to the bone, as he'd pick and then crack for the marrer.

I do so 'ope now as this'ere war is over in Injier, as we shall make peace with them Africins, cos it don't look well for Queen Wictorier's name to be mixed up along with them poor denuded savidges; tho' I don't espect as there'll be peace long, for Moore's Almanack 'ave got a picter as purtends orful things, and Miss Pilkinton she nearly 'ad 'sterrics arter supper last Sunday, and shed tears in 'er sperrits-and-water thro' young Musham

a-tellin' 'er wot the Merrykins is a predictin' for us, as is total darkness for a 'ole fortnight, and then that orful 'eat as will kill us all off as is over forty, or under twenty, and then a drort as is to burn up everythink, and then wot's left of us will enjoy a fine autumn, as will set in about Christmas, I should think, tho' if things goes on gettin' wuss and wuss, wotever is the end to be, as must be a reglar bust up, wot with riverlutions and burnin' mountings, as is all along with shootin' sovrins like the Prooshins and the Rooshins, and that there Umbug, King of Italy, tho' some say as them things is all got up by these 'ere governments, as is a escuse for pitchin' into the people; but I must say as I've my doubts about that Grabidaldi a-comin' to Rome, as don't mean no good, tho' there's a party as Mrs. Padwick knows as 'ave got a cousin as 'ave been livin' over in Rome, and says as Grabidaldi is a-goin' to turn Catholic, and go down on 'is marrer-bones to the Pope, tho' he 'ave once jined the Baptists, and seemed to take to the Metherdists; but, law, there's no tellin' wot he mayn't do afore he dies, tho' I dare say that King Umbug wishes 'im 'anged with all 'is 'art, tho' he daresn't say so. But all as I 'opes for is peace, cos wars do run into the money so dreadful, and we shall 'ave taxes the same as there was in Old Bonyparty's time, when they taxed the werry light as come from 'evan,

together with 'air-powder and men-servants, and all manner, but it come out all right, for we managed to floor that old wiper, and so we would agin, if any one was to come them same games as he tried on, a-goin' about a-bullyin' everybody, as did ought to be a lesson to them French, as won't never be quiet, and I'm sure it give me quite a turn a-standin' by St. Martin's Church, and see the Prince of Wales and 'is good lady and one of the little gals a-goin' over to Paris, as is always like dancin' over a wolcano under your feet, as might bust out at any time, not as they dare touch any freeborn Briton, let alone the Prince of Wales, only he didn't ought to be too free with them Republickins, as in course would like to see 'is royal 'ead a-rollin' on the scaffoldin'; and it is well as Queen Wictorier is up in the 'Ighlands, for if she knowed as they was gone, she wouldn't never close 'er royal eyes, a-thinkin' 'ow them French 'ave treated their own royal families; not but wot it's come 'ome to 'em, and will agin, for all their braggin', and, as Brown always says, let 'em give Old Beastmark only 'arf a chance, and he'll give it 'em 'otter than ever, and serve 'em right too, if they won't be quiet and leave off bullyin' everybody else, as is their delight.

Some parties says as it's only their light-arted ways, as is like Mr. Clisby's mare, as would every

now and then 'ave a fling, and kick wotever were behind 'er 'eels to ribbins, and were nearly my death as a toucher, a-comin' 'ome from Fairlop Fair, as 'ad went like a lamb till we got close agin Mile End Gate, and then she took and laid down 'er ears, and let fly that wiolent, as in five minnits the sharps was broke, and the shay cart a reglar wreck, and me a-layin' in the 'orse-trough as did used to stand in front of the "Blind Beggar," and were wedged in that tight as I couldn't move nor yet 'oller, and it was 'ours afore they found me, soaked thro' and thro', and the night that dark as nobody couldn't see a yard afore 'em, and that trough full of water, and shouldn't 'ave been found at all if it 'adn't been as the errand cart stopped to water the 'orse, as put 'is nose in my face; so I give sich a wiolent plunge as reglar startled 'im, and then the carrier found me, as I do think were the beginnin' of my roomatics, as 'ave settled in the small of my back, and made me set my face agin races, as I didn't know the meanin' on; for, when fust Brown asked me if I'd go to the Darby, I says, "Wotever is that?" and when he told me as it was a grand race, where millions was lost, I says, "I don't old with such goin's-on," and didn't say no more, and the subjec' was dropped till drinkin' tea with Mrs. Heafey, when she says, "Well, then, Mr. Brown, we're all a-goin' to the Darby." Brown, he

says, "I'm agreeable; aint you, old woman?" I says, "Darby, indeed! I should like to catch myself a-goin'! None of your races for me, Mr. Brown, as is things as has brought more parties to ruin than prehaps drink itself, as will undermind the pocket and bring sorrow to the 'eart; for I'm sure there was them young Teddlisons, as I knowed babies, and went entire wrong thro' races, as ended their days in transports, and brought down their mother to the grave afore they was fifteen thro' playin' in the streets and stoppin' out o' nights, as honest a woman as ever trod shoe leather, with a spirit as nothing wouldn't brook; and she says to me, 'Mrs. Brown,' she says, 'if ever I thought as my boys hadn't their clean shirt ready for a Sunday, I couldn't rest in my grave;' as I don't believe as she did, poor soul! for I've seen them boys of her'n, after she was took from 'em, ragamuffins, as the sayin' is, of a Sunday mornin', thro' the father bein' a man as didn't keep a home; so they was to be pitied. Not as ever I 'eld with them a-strikin' 'im both at once, tho' aggravatin' in licker he certainly was, as them woodin-legged parties often is. I'm sure them boys might 'ave done well but for them bettin' officers as they got into their 'eads, and robbin' the till was the end of it. Of course, Brown, I knows I aint a-goin' to rob a till, whoever says I was; but what I says is, that is what racin'

comes to, and that's why I aint a-goin' to races. It's all very well to talk about Mr. Heafey's cart, but I knows what that is capable on." Certainly, the weather was lovely, and me a-pantin' for the green fields, so I give way, for if there is a thing as I do long for, it's a sight of the buttercups and daisies as I used to see once, thro' bein' sent out to nuss at Chigwell Row, when far from strong, and throwed back in my teething, and never was a child to thrive thro' livin' in the City, as my own father was in the Excise Office, and would be now, if he hadn't died, with apartments in the basement, which, tho' cool, wasn't cheerful, and was therefore put out to nurse. So Brown, he says, "You can go or stop, as you likes, but I'm off, and there's a seat in the cart for you." I says, "Brown, if you think as I'm a-goin' to make a third on that front seat of that cart, you're mistaken, for I'm sure, let alone bein' scrouged up, Mr. Heafey's elber in my side constant, I can't stand thro' 'im bein' that wiolent with that 'orse, and a-jerkin' at 'is mouth as was enuf to rinse 'is 'ead off; and," I says, "no, thank you." "Well," says Brown, "then 'ave a chair behind, where there's room and ample for four." Certainly that day was wot I call a lowery day, and I said as there'd be rain afore long, thro' the new moon a-comin' up very much on 'er back, and my feet bein' that throbby as made

me jump agin; and I was up that early, as made me feel tired afore we started; and touch a bit with my breakfast I couldn't, was it ever so; and Brown was that aggrawatin', and sayin' as I was dressed too hot; but I says, "I'm sure, Brown, a-settin' about in the open air all day is apt for to stagnate the blood, as will take a chill sudden."

Mrs. Heafey she's quite the lady, tho' thro' bein' 'is second don't get on with 'is daughter by the first, as is only older than 'er by two years, and as plain a gal as ever you set eyes on, but dressed out in a clear musling, as showed 'er black boots, as looked bad, and then there was little Charley, as certingly Mrs. Heafey do make a fool on, thro' 'im bein' the only one and sickly from 'is birth, and there was Mrs. Heafey's mother, as is a party I can't abear, thro' 'avin' seen 'er in liquor myself, and then there was Brown and me, seven in all; and I'm sure the way as that cart tilted up when Mrs. Jarvis, as is Mrs. Heafey's mother, got in behind, nearly pitched me back'ards, and I was that aggrawated with Brown, as kep' a-callin' of us ballast, and when we started the way as the sharps stuck out in front of that 'orse's 'ead, like horns, was sing'ler, but certainly he looked beautiful, thro' bein' dressed out lovely with laylocks and laburniums in 'is fore'ead, and seemed quite proud on it, a-tossin' 'is 'ead up like a fellow-creature, and certingly a very pleasant

drive we had, I must say; not as I was over comfortable, thro' the basket of provisions bein' crammed in so as I couldn't move my feet, with a large stone bottle of beer a-crowdin' up the bottom of the cart, and that boy Charley a-keepin' a-climbin' all about, as I expected to see under the wheel at every turn. Well, if it 'adn't been for the dust as was clouds, I should 'ave liked to have looked about me, and was thankful for a glass of ale now and then, as we took to rest the 'orse, as would 'ave been very pleasant but for words atween Brown and Mr. Heafey about the road, as got thicker and thicker, and crowded with vehicles more and more at every turn as we took, and I never did see sich elegance, the carriages, with ladies dressed that lovely as made you quite think as they must be duchesses at least, and the post-boys with silk jackets and ribbins, and the gentlemen in their wails, as looked very effemeral, and the drivin' and the hootin' as were quite stunnin', what ever they kep' a-shootin' peas at me, for I can't think, partikler some gentlemen outside of a four-horse coach as was werry polite, a-sayin', "'Ow are you, Mrs. Brown?" and then all pelted me shameful. I certainly was very nigh stifled, wot with my 'eavy things and the 'eat and dust, and when the sun come out I thought I should 'ave died, when all of a sudden we stopped, with that sudden jerk, as pitched me nearly out of the

cart, as proved as we was got there; and glad I was to get out of that cart, though my limbs bein' that cramped in tryin' to, that down I goes flop, thro' Brown a-jumpin' me out sudden, and I says, "Brown, I never shall get up no more unless I had a-somethin' for to take," as certainly brought me round, but law, the dust, I never was in such a state, and took ever so long for to shake me, and when, arter a good long rest, I was cooled down a bit, me and Charley went for a walk, for I was downright sick of 'earin' them Heafey's a-wranglin', so I walks myself off along with the child. Brown he 'ollars out, he says, "Don't you go far, as you'll miss us." I says, "Brown, I wasn't born yesterday," and off I goes, and we walks along, and kep' seein' the company arrive, and some was a-eatin' and drinkin' and goin' on, and I must say as I wish as there had been someone with me to have told me the names of some of the company as was dressed that lovely tho' a-goin' on too freely to please me. Well, we was a-walkin' along and fellows kep' a-offerin' of me cards, and wanted me to have a shy at cokernuts; and a brazen creature of a gipsy, all bedizened out, begun a-tellin' of my fortune along of the side of a carriage where there was a lot of grinnin' young fellows and ladies, and the next carriage to them was full of parties as, of course, was ladies, but I must say as they was too free in their

langwidge for me, so after we'd walked about ever so long, thro' feelin' tired, I says, "Charley," I says, "we'll go back to your ma;" he says, "Do;" so we turned back, and was walkin' along, when all of a sudden I gets a crack on the side of my 'ead as made me 'oller, and down I goes like a shot; it was one of them fools as was a-shyin' with sticks at pincushions and things, as 'ad missed 'is aim and struck me. I says, "You villain, I'll have the law on you. Police," I says, and if they didn't all laugh, so I says to the boy, "Let's get out of this," and we crawled under horses' feet, and thro' coaches as came a-drivin' like mad at you. So I says, "This is the way, Charley, come along," but the more we kep' a-walkin' and a-walkin', and I couldn't see nothin' of the cart, tho' I could swear as I knowed the spot where I'd left it, so at last we gets out of the scrouge into a open place, where there wasn't nobody a-walkin', and I was lookin' up at a place like a theayter, where crowds was a-settin' one above the other. I says, "I wonder who they can be," when all of a sudden a chap comes a-ridin' up and says, "Get off the course, will you." "No," I says, "I wont, I'm a-lookin' for Mr. Heafey's cart as is close at 'and, and I shan't go till I finds it."

He says, "You must go. Here!" he says, and out rushes two policemen like tigers on me. Little Charley begun a-screamin', people was a-'ollerin'

and a-'ootin', and two police catches 'old of me each side by the arms; and if they didn't run me along with them till my very breath was gone, and my legs a-failin', and one of my boots was gone, as I'd unlaced for ease. They dragged me on, till at last I ketches my foot in something, and down we all went with that shock, as 'arf stunned me; and when I come to, parties was a-standin' round, and give me water, as I wouldn't touch, thro' fear of a chill, and Charley a-screamin' for his ma; and one lady says to me, "Mum, it's a mussy as you're 'ere; for," she says, "if them police hadn't saved you, you'd a been run down by the race."

Well, I'd lost my redicule, and 'adn't no change to get nothin' for to pacify Charley, as would keep on a-'owlin' awful, till I quite loses all patience, and gives him a good shake, sayin', "'Old your row, do!"

Just then I 'eard Mrs. Heafey holler out, "You please to let my child alone, you old wixen." And there we was, close agin the cart. So I says, "Mum," I says, "he did ought to be taught better." She says, "You mind your own bisness, and don't take my child with you agin when you goes a-filanderin' about on the tramp." I was put out; for Brown began a-blowin' me up, and said as they'd waited for me ever so long, till they was famished; and if they 'adn't been and 'ad the

wittles, and messed everything about, as quite turned my stomick. I'm sure the meat-pie as I'd made that lovely looked as if dogs 'ad been at it, and the cold lamb 'acked to nothin', and the 'am that 'ard and salt, I couldn't a-touched it. So I 'adn't nothink but a bit of bread-and-cheese, and a drop of beer, as was flat as ditch-water; and was that hurt with Mrs. Heafey, as I shed tears on the quiet, and went and set down on the ground; and certingly Brown did bring me a little cold without when he come, and said he was goin' 'ome. So I gets into that cart with a 'eavy 'eart, and we was jest a-drivin' off, when I gets a blow in the back, as took my breath away; and if it wasn't parties in coaches as was peltin' oranges like mad, as came as thick as 'ail, a-smashin' all over me and ruined all my things. As to Mrs. Jarvis, she was that unwell all the way 'ome, as I 'ad to 'old 'er up, tho' dreadful faint myself, and luckily 'ad a somethin' with me. Not as I pitied 'er; "for," I says, "a female as will give in to drink deserves all she gets."

Just as I was a-talkin', and gettin' to warm words with Mrs. Heafey, I got that queer, and turned dead faint like, and wasn't brought to for ever so long; and jest then down came the rain in torrents, and I was that drenched, as they 'ad to wring me out. When we got 'ome, I suppose they

put me to bed, but I remember nothin' till the next mornin', when Brown give me a cup of tea, and says, "I tell you what it is, old gal; you'll find out as beer and sperrits don't mix comfortable." But I says, "Brown, it wasn't nothin' as I took, but the sudden change of air as was too bracin' for me on a empty stomick." So he says, "Gammon; it's all right. Only next time you ain't goin' to be trusted with the bottle." So I says, "Next time as I goes you may trust me with everythink." Not but wot I likes my pleasure; only wot I finds fault with is as parties won't never be merry and wise, and can't 'ave no moderation in their ways, any more than in their livin', and will spend all their ready money in a 'outin, as must run in debt to live arterwards; and if these 'ere Corporation Stores can stop parties from outrunnin' the constable, as the sayin' is, why, then they certingly will do good by pullin' them up as is goin' the pace too fast, as is sure to 'ave a bad fall in the long run."

I'm sure Stores is all the rage, and like everythink else most to be found where they're least wanted, for I've 'eard say, thro' a doctor as is out in them parts, as the want of stores for the sick and wounded over in Africa is downright shameful, and there's them poor dear fellers as 'ave been sent out for to slorter them Zulus off the face of the earth,

as is not only wounded but dyin' of fevers and sich like, with no medicines, and not a drop of brandy for to revive them as is sinkin', and it's a downright disgrace to send men out like slaves to be killed by neglect as well as by savidges, as in course takes their own parts; but as to goin' to war when you aint got no things ready, it's downright murder; and it's all werry fine layin' the blame on that there Gladstin, as no doubt let the harmy and navy too go down at 'eel, thro' a-talkin' that bosh about no more wars, and no more taxes, like that old John Bright and 'is Quaker rubbish; but as Brown were a-sayin' there always will be wars, and there always will be taxes, and as to talkin' about people bein' too civilized to fight, they never were and never will be. Ah! he says, "It's werry fine for us to be a-talkin' about bein' Christshun in little books for children, but it's something like parties as never goes to church theirselves, but sends the children and the governess, or sets werry still and looks solem of a Sunday, and leads nice lives all the week, let alone the cheatin' and the robbery as is goin' on all round, even with them as wouldn't miss chapel was it ever so."

I says, "Brown, you let the chapel alone, and don't be a-runnin' it down."

He says, "I aint a-runnin' of it down. I'm only sayin' as I wish as parties when out of chapel

would practice wot they did ought to learn in chapel."

"Ah!" I says, "then you'd 'ave parties perfect."

"No fear of that," says he; "but I tell you wot we might 'ope for, and that is to 'ave a somethink like Christshuns about the place, and not sich lots of spurious imitations of the article as we sees everywhere; but," he says, "old gal, you're right about them harmy stores, for tho' there's lots on 'em, they're as badly managed now as they was in the Crimeer, when our sojers 'ad their toes froze off thro' not 'avin' boots nor yet stockin's; and as to nussin', it's no joke, and not sich work as fancy old maids can set at 'ome and 'rite about, and get their names in the papers, as calls them hangels; but the real nusses is never praised and flattered, but does good on the quiet, as never will be known in this world; and I am glad as Queen Wictorier is a-goin' to make some use of that there St. Kathrin's Charity at last, and 'opes as them nusses will be the right sort, not a set of young ladies as thinks as nussin' is only like readin' of a novel, and that interestin' for to go and nuss some 'ansome young feller, as may end in a match, like I 'eard speak of one of them parsins as is that 'Igh Church as 'ad nussin' sisters for to visit the sick in the parish, as in course the minister went

to see every day, and married the youngest and prettiest of the lot, as in course will incourage all the young ladies to turn nusses, as will lead tc gettin' well settled in life; and now they're a-goin' on about them churches bein' that empty at the East End, as is a part I knows well, thro' a-livin' there on and off over five-and-twenty years, and remembers well the Bishop a-comin' to open them new churches as were a marter to gout, as is more than forty year ago now, when I fust married; but law bless you, buildin' churches for them parties as lives about there, is like gettin' clean water for the ducks, or boots and shoes for the cats and dogs, cos them Bethnal Green costers don't want no churches, cos they don't believe in nothink, and never goes inside a church; and it's wonderful 'ow good they are in their ways. There's a good many serous young men, both 'Igh and Low Church, as goes out a teachin' of a Sunday, and then there's City Mishuns and Bible-women, and lots a-tryin' to do good for nothink, tho' in a gen'ral way they're paid for it, cos in course they can't give up their time and neglect their 'omes for nothink; but the poor don't want 'em a-pokin' about their places, and a-intrudin' on their meal times with their readin's and tracks, and I'm sure I've known myself parties as took the tracks, as long as they got a shillin' or two in the course of Christmas time.

As to them Dissenters, partikler the Methody sort, they wants all to be preachers; but in general Chapel parties is the smartest, best-dressed lot as you'll see of a Sunday, and I'm sure the young ladies as goes a-teachin' of Sabbath-schools, why, they're dressed the top of the fashuns, and picks up bows as easy as pins. And as to one minister as preached to the sailors down by the Docks, he were that poplar, and lived like a fightin'-cock, with 'is wife dressed in green satin, as quite took the shine out of the Church minister's lady, tho' she were quite the lady with eleven children, as she must 'ave worked 'ard to keep as nice as she did, and the father's time took up teachin' 'is five boys so as to get 'em ready for school, and not above two 'undred a year clear for to live on; so 'owever can he help the poor, as is as poor as any in 'is parish, if not poorer? and a nice gentleman, thō' a deal to 'igh for our landlord, as is a large publickin, and went over to the Dissenters, and took the butcher and the ile-shop with 'im, cos there was a surplus quire at the Church, as they all considers Popish. They wanted to persuade me and Brown to jine 'em, but Brown, he soon settled 'em, a-sayin' as religion were a subjic as he never spoke about to nobody; and as to me, I shet Mrs. Clisby, the butcher's wife, up with a crump, as the sayin' is, when she begun

a-talkin' to me, for I says to 'er when she told me as they'd took seats at the Chapel, I says, "Jest wot I espected; for," I says, "dressed that 'ansom, as you are, why, you seemed quite out of your place comin' out of Church with the dowdy few as goes there, and will feel at 'ome with all the smart bonnets as comes out of Bethesder of a Sunday." But jest look at poor people's Sunday, as in course they gets up late thro' 'avin' no work to go to, and no beer to be 'ad till after Church. Well, the man 'as a bit and a cup of tea, and then goes out for 'is shave and gets 'is boots cleaned, and by the time as he comes back the wife she've been and tidied up the children, and sent a bit of wittles to the ovin, as in genral the 'usban 'ave took there, as then will take the children and the dog out for a walk, and the wife she'll take and wash up a few things, and make the room tidy, tho' not time to clean 'erself before dinner, as she'd do arter, and then fall asleep all the arternoon while 'er 'usban is a reading a paper. And if it's fine weather, they'll go out for a walk arter tea, and come 'ome to a bit of cold grub and a drop of beer before goin' to bed. As is the picter of a decent workin'-man's life, as there's scores on, as don't see no good in religion, cos most on 'em don't know whether they've got souls, and don't care whether they 'ave or not, cos they're brought up to argufy and talk about them things as they

knows nothink on, and is often led away by parties as is more ignorant than theirselves, and makes money out of misleadin' them as is ignorant and eat up with conceit.

No wonder as them 'parsons wants to set up a Store of their own ; not as I can see 'ow they'd get the money to lay in a large stock of things, as is 'ow them Stores is able to sell so cheap, and yet make a profit, but no doubt them bishops and some of them rich deans was a-goin' to come down 'ansom, so as to stock the place well; not but wot them bishops and deans 'as been cut down theirselves, as did used to 'ave their tens of thousans, but now 'as to put up with thousans, and some on 'em only 'underds, as is 'ard lines when you've got to keep up a pallis, with a wife and family as must cut a good figger, and lives among nobility. I'm one for keepin' up heverything in a proper way, and in course there's a many tradespeople as makes tremenjous profits, as lives in stile with their carridges and 'ouses all a-apin' of their betters, and wantin' to be thought swells, as in course they never can't be, not for all their fine clothes. But I ain't one myself to 'ave too large a stock of anythink by me, for I remembers many years ago when things were that frightful dear, as there were a party as lived out Hanwell way, he took and laid in a stock of heverythink for the winter, but wot with servants and

their follerers a-wastin' and a pilferin' as they always will do if there's a lot of anythink about, and wot with rats and mice dewourin', let alone the damp a-spilin' things, with blackbeetles and cockroches a-destroyin' more than they eat, 'is stores was pretty soon nobbled up; and as every one knows well a shop's a great convenience, partikler if you've forgot anythink on Saturday night, as will let you 'ave it at the private door, early Sunday mornin', and not be considered no Sabbath breakers neither, as some people would be a-callin' you for buyin' your wittles on a Sunday, as you can't do at the Stores, as 'ave give in to early closin' every Saturday, and that's 'ow Mrs. Avershot lost 'er Chrismas dinner, as fell on a Sunday that year, with seven on 'em to eat it, as her father, as she 'adn't been friends with, took and sent 'is ticket for the Store and a order for everythink up to two pounds, as she didn't get out at Stepney Green till the middle of the day Saturday, as were Chrismas Eve, and 'urried like mad to get up to them Stores in the 'Aymarket by four o'clock, as she found 'ad been shet two 'ours afore, so couldn't get as much as a smell of anythink for them poor children, as she 'ad the two eldest along with 'er to 'elp bring the things 'ome, as the one were jest past eleven, and the other ten and a 'arf; as had borrered sixpence of me for to make up the bus money, and when she

comes back empty 'anded, jest as I dropped in for to see wot she'd got, and give 'er advice about layin' out the money, as were meat, and bread and butter, and tea and sugar. I never did see a woman more broke down with all those 'ungry mouths round 'er, with nothink but a bit of bread and treacle for dinner, with Avershot in bed thro' the water a-settlin' in 'is legs arter the delirous trimmins, as 'ad wore 'im down to a shadder, and settled on 'is chest, as had been drored off by the docters three times, as give 'im 'opes of recovery. Poor man, he were not a bad sort, and took to lickerin' up thro' bettin' companions. He was broke down when he see the empty basket as she'd took to 'old the things. She's not a one to grizzle and fret, as 'ad worked like a slave to keep that man, and was a-goin' to be fined for not sendin' of 'er two eldest to school, only Brown he went to the magistret and spoke up for 'er, as would 'ave had to go to prison, for pay she couldn't, and then to talk about this bein' a free country, and that old fool Miss Pilkinton, a-sayin' as it were right, thro' everybody bein' made to go to school in Proosher. I says, "Wot's Proosher to us? as is a set of slaves, grounded down by that old Beastmark, and a nice set they've turned out, as is all 'eathens and Socialists, and werry nigh nobbled that old pious William and 'is Golden Weddin', as is a nice

mockery, when a man and wife 'ave been married fifty years, and lived apart nearly all the time."

As I were a-sayin', poor Mrs. Avershot, she didn't set long, tho' tired; but she says as parties owed 'er three-and-fourpence, and if I didn't mind the sixpence a-standin' over till next week, she'd go and get a bit of somethin' for a Chrismas dinner; and she spoke that cheery, as made that poor man shed tears, and my eyes was all weak like, with a lump in my throat. So I says, "Never mind the sixpence, nor yet the dinner, cos," I says, "I've made you a pound puddin', and our Liza 'ave sent us a basket as won't keep this muggy weather, and there's a lovely spare rib of pork as won't do for you, Mr. Avershot, as a roast pigeon will suit you better." So I says, "Sam, you come along with me while your mother's gone to get 'er money, as will buy bread and coals; and you don't need to get no butter, for wot we've got must be eat." So that good ooman she couldn't thank me, as I didn't give 'er a chance, thro' 'urryin' out with the boy. And certingly that spare rib were a picter, tho' small; so I give them the leg, as there were more eatin' on, and sent Avershot a fowl, as there's more on than a pigeon, and I'm glad as I filled that basket with some eggs and butter, and a bit of cheese; for when Brown came 'ome, he'd 'ad a

turkey give 'im, and a Stilton cheese; and Liza 'ad sent me a 'am of 'er own curin', as eat beautiful, as I sent to the oven with a paste over it, as kep' it from burnin', with the gravy in. And certingly if ever a illness saved a man, it were that Avershot, as turned over a new leaf the moment as he got out of bed, and emigrated afore the year were out, and I 'ave 'eard say is doin' werry well over there; and if ever I should get to Horsetralier, I'll drop in and see 'em, cos I've made up my mind if Brown goes over to this 'ere Exhibishun, I goes too, for all as they can say about a long sea voyage; cos, as I says, 'ave I not wowed to be true to Brown in sickness and in 'ealth; and 'ow am I to prove my words anywheres so well as aboard of a wessel? Besides, 'ow am I to know 'ow he's a-gettin' on all them miles unless I'm with 'im? Cos, tho' he might telegraft twice a day, as would run in to money, that wouldn't prove nothink, thro' 'im bein' one as will be arf dead with a cold, and yet quite shirty if you wants 'im to put 'is feet in mustard and water, or 'ave a taller plaster on 'is chest, as is a fine thing for the breathin', tho' I do believe in 'ot rum and water, with a lump of butter in it, for some constitutions, though the werry thought on it makes me feel queer, and talkin' about it would bring on the 'eaves in a jiffy, thro' never bein' a strong stomick myself, not even when fust married, as a

baked leg of pork were always too many for me, and am not partial to no baked meats, as in gen'ral tastes of the oven, tho' I 'ave knowed a fillet of weal turn out well, as were our weddin' dinner, as my dear mother give us, with a biled tung, as I remember well a uncle of mine makin' a joke about it bein' a thing as I wanted, thro' always bein' one of the silent sort from a gal.

MRS. BROWN ON CO-OPERATIVE STORES.

MRS. WELDIN, as is arf sister by the father's side to Mrs. Judkin, as is in the corset and dress improver line up Camdin Town way, bein' left a widder with five, as fust started in the baby linen busyness, she were a old friend of mine, as looked in frequent to tea, and so it were as she was talkin' to me about these 'ere Co-operative Stores, as 'ave cut up the shops that dreadful, that wot with 'ard winter and perpetial colds, with bronkitis. I didn't think as on Christmas Eve Mrs. Liversuch would ever 'ave 'eld up 'er 'ead agin, as did used to 'ave a pretty fancy busyness in the toy and sweetmeat line, as 'ave been ruined thro' the grocers a-takin' to the bulls-eye trade, with toys thrown in at Christmas time, as is 'ow Mrs. Liversuch did used to pay 'er rent, poor soul, and now only sees the workus' a yornin' like a absess under 'er feet, as makes any one feel sore, and must say is painful in the evenin' of your days, arter livin' in com-

fort, and then to come to be pinched and in a corner for arf a ounce of tea. Live and let live 'ave always been my motter, as is the same thing as doin' as you'd be done by, but in course I'm old-fashioned in my ways, I am, and parties larfs at me, and says, "Oh! bother your naybour, look out for yourself," as is all werry fine, but selfishness always comes 'ome to 'em, as gives into it when they comes for to want 'elp, as most on us does afore we dies, and I must say as I think as busyness now-a-days is reglar dog eat dog, as the sayin' is; tho' in course we must look out for ourselves; and no doubt them Stores is a great 'elp to many carridge folks, as goes in with a pocketful of money, and saves tuppence on a pound of soap, as is somethink for them as 'ave the ready money by them, but 'ow about the thousands as lives pretty tidy with the 'elp of a little credit, not as I 'olds with runnin' in debt, but I don't see as it can be 'elped, unless every one starts in life with their wages paid in advance, for I'm sure when Brown and me begun 'ousekeepin', if it 'adn't been for a little credit I should 'ave run short for many a thing as I wanted for the children towards the middle of the week, as always found as Friday were a 'ard day to get thro', as is the reason no doubt as so many considers it a unlucky day, but then Brown always were a steady man, and never kep' back a fardin' of 'is

wages beyond a shillin' or eighteen pence, as he kep' for baccy and beer, unless it was 'is boots, as always runs into money, as he in genral paid off at arf-a-crown a week. The wust of credit is when parties gets into extravagant ways thro' it, and will 'ave 'ot suppers and tops up with sperrits and water, when they can't afford more than bread and cheese, with a pint of porter, as I never 'ad but a glass at night myself, not even with a infant at the breast, as requires keepin' up and 'ave dragged many a poor soul into 'er grave untimely, and drove some reglar desprate, like a young creatur' as pisened 'er child, and tried to pisen 'erself thro' the father a-desertin' 'er, a cowardly waggerbone. Not but wot I should like to 'ear more about that, 'cos I never considers as that's much of a escuse for murderin' a innocent child, as aint natral, cos in my opinion no decent gal wouldn't trust a feller as was no doubt always a waggerbone, and as to 'er a-complainin' about 'er mother, that's all rubbish, a-blamin' the poor woman without earin' of 'er side, cos it's all werry fine for parties, as 'ave tender 'arts like Queen Wictorier, as takes and reads them noosepapers, to say, "Poor thing! wot a wretch 'er mother must 'ave been"; but I say it's werry 'ard on a decent 'ard-workin' woman, as 'ave worked 'ard and done 'er best to bring up a family proper, and 'ave a gal turn out a saucy idle drab, as won't do nothink

but idle about the streets, and then come 'ome on 'er mother's 'ands with a infant to support, as is enuf to make any mother's temper turn sour, for none but them as 'ave gone thro' it can tell wot it is to 'ave but one room for seven of you, and then to 'ave another throwed on your 'ands from the month as praps will cry all night, poor little dear, thro' neglect. I don't believe in that ill-used innercent young mother, as is in genral a forward impident 'ussy, as when she comes afore the magistrate can wimper and cry and make out a fine tale, as makes soft'arted parties believe in 'er, like these 'ere charitable ladies as will take up some of the wilest impostors and 'elp 'em to extort money from decent parties thro' a-trumpin' up a parcel of lies, as Brown were a-readin' about the other night; tho' in course whether the old gent were a lamb for innercence, or a ram for wice, he didn't seem exactly to make out, but that don't matter, that fieldmale were a wile wretch, and as to that there lady as backed 'er up she did ought to be ashamed of 'erself. Call that doin' good, indeed, it's all 'umbug, and there's a lot of fancy old maids as gets them 'umanity mongerin' notions in their 'eads and goes about a-kidnappin' children, and sends em off abroad away from their parints and friends, as perhaps their only fault is bein' poor. Not as I'm speakin' agin them as really goes in for employin' the poor

and 'elpin' 'em, but I don't 'old with takin' away a child from its mother, as is agin nature, and as to sayin' as their parints aint fit to bring 'em up thro' settin' em a bad esample, I'm sure there's many swells as did ought to 'ave their children took away from 'em, the same as that disgrace to her sect, that there parson's wife, tho' I pities 'im, tho' I'd 'ave 'er flogged at the cart's tail, a old 'ussey; as if she 'ad 'er way would bring 'em up in that awful wice that infamus as would bring fire down from 'Evan not as she believes in that, nor yet the other place, as will most likely find it out for 'erself some day, and be sorry for the herror of 'er ways when she gets the wrong hend of the stick, a nasty beast, as I should jest like a jury of decent matterns to set on 'er, and not leave a 'ole bit in 'er skin, a filthy wretch, as is enuf to make your blood bile to think of such carrion bein' your own sect. In course there's a deal of distress about, as these 'ere Stores may 'elp, but in a general way it's parties' own faults, as no doubt some marries werry imprudent, but if they're decent people they're sure to be 'elped thro' their troubles, and if a man can't get on with a large family 'ere, let 'im hemigrate and go where the more children the better, as every child is a treasure.

But as to Corporation Stores there's a deal to

be said on both sides, and in my opinion trades is carried on in a werry untradesman-like way, wot with 'dulterations and short weight as parties is fined for, and a many 'ave done it under the cloak of religion, as is why chandly shops and coal-sheds is so often of a serous turn, but I never will mix up my religion with where I deals, for I'm sure of all the thieves as ever I did know it were a party in the name of Turner, as were a-robbin' everybody right and left, and yet a-stickin' to 'is chapel. Not but wot I knowed a party once as 'ad 'is shop winder full of tracks and placards out of Scripture, as were a 'onest man in spite of all that, but yet I never fancied 'im cos I thinks as parties didn't never ought to make a show of their religion, cos if they do 'appen to get the 'rong side of the post, they makes all them as is agin religion jeer and larf. But as to Stores as is no sores, as the sayin' is, it seems to me as they're only for the rich, as you can tell by the carridges as is always a-waitin' outside, and we all know wot ready money will do, and yet werry few arter all ever 'as it at their fingers' ends, and there's a many as 'ave got it can't bear to spend it, and will take tick with the money in their pockets all the time, or at their bankers, as can't bear to part, as the sayin' is; and 'ow them as ain't got money contrives to live as they do is wonderful, as will dress out as if

they'd thousan's; where they aint got hundreds, and seems never to think as the day of reckonin' is a-comin', till it's down on 'em pretty 'ot, partikler with them as aint got nothink to fall back on when a rainy day comes, as may be sickness, or even death, as we're all liable to, the same as Mrs. Sholto's married dorter's 'usban' as give in to ploorisy within two days, tho' in my opinion, there were more than met the eye, for I do believe there's a many a-goin' the pace too fast, as gets desprate and takes to drinkin' on the quiet; and so I were a-sayin' to 'er mother, as is Mrs. Pinel, and a woman as 'ave seen better days, tho' as to ridin' in 'er own carridge I don't believe a word of it any more than 'er bein' a beauty as King George the Fourth went down on 'is knees to in 'Igh Park when Prince of Wales.

But, as I were a-sayin', there must be a deal of sham all about, with parties a-pretendin' to be swells as aint; and I'm sure, when I walks out Brompton ways, I do stare to see all them Gunter's Grounds built over, as is the pastry-cook's; and wherever the parties comes from, let alone the money to take the 'ouses as is built all about, and whoever can buy all the furniture as you sees about, and not things as is useful, but reglar splendor; for I'm sure there's stuff for curtins in some of them winders in Tottenham Court Road, as would make Queen Wictorier stare, and no doubt would

stop the carridge to look at 'em, if not ask the price, only there'd be sich a crowd round 'er in a instant, as she couldn't get a anser; as is no doubt the reason as she gives them strick orders about parties bein' shet out of the dockyard when she's a-goin' anywheres; not as she'd mind bein' looked at, bless 'er royal 'art! only she'd be reglar mobbed, cos we all knows as a cat may look at a king; but if cats come round in crowds by the thousan, why, in course it would be too much of a good thing even for a king, tho' they mightn't mean no 'arm, poor things, any more than them Dock labourers, as was all shet out down at Portsmouth. But I don't 'old with them private ways, cos parties loves their Queen, and is pleased to 'ave even a glimpse of 'er, whether it's joys or sorrers as is a-'angin' over 'er royal 'ead; and it's a bad way to snub any one as means kind, and wouldn't make no noise, nor yet 'oorayin', if they thought it would make 'er royal 'ead ake; and as to bowin', would not be espected of 'er, but arter all, bless 'er royal 'art, let 'er do as she pleases, cos if she's pleased, we're pleased, and there's a end of it, whether we sees 'er or not, as long as we knows as she's well and 'appy with our best wishes, thro' bein' a great-grandmother, as I shall be next month, thro' Joe's eldest.

In course the shops feels werry sore over these

'ere Corporation Stores, as shows as it aint always true the sayin' as stores is no sores; but then, in course we all wants to buy in the cheapest market, as is wot John Bright is so fond of sayin', tho' we all knows as sometimes the dearest turns out the cheapest in the hend; just like poor old Mr. Timbly, as went all the way from Shepherd's Bush to Billingsgate for to get a cheap dish of fish, and come 'ome with a stinkin' turbit, as he'd been struck with by a coster close agin London Bridge; as shows it's sich foolishness for a man to go to market with no nose, tho' I think as any one can tell stale fish by the eye, partikler cod, as 'ave dead looks about 'em when out of the water over a week, tho' I must say as them fishmongers, as destroys loads of fish so as it shouldn't be sold too cheap, did ought to be put down along with their prices.

I've 'eard say as it's the little shopkeepers as is bein' ruined by these Stores, but that's all gammon; cos as long as parties wants credit they must go to the shops, though no doubt there's parties as will lay out their ready money at the Stores, and take long tick at the shops where they deals, as I don't consider fair myself; and as to credit, no doubt there's tradespeople as often gives it to get customers, and makes them as pays in the long run pay for them as never pays at all. For I well remember a parson as lived up by the New Road,

as owed over seventy pounds at a chanderly shop, as was a doctor and rode in 'is carridge, tho' I've 'eard say as he were only a play-actor when young. Not but wot I've knowed play-actors as paid up like bank-notes, for my dear mother washed for two ladies as did used to dance, and was called members of the ballot—leastways that's 'ow it were rote, tho' they called it the bally, in French; but that's the way with them French as can't spell a bit, and calls everythink rong, but as to tryin' to set the French right over anythink, you might as well try to wash a blackymore white. But, for my part, I never weren't ashamed of owin' a few shillin's to my baker, nor yet the butterman, a-knowin' as the money's safe; but do not like a butcher's bill, as will run up like wildfire, and never cares for a milk-score, and considers tick at a public-'ouse the next thing to takin' to drink. I'm sure many's the time as me and Brown 'ave gone to bed with the snow on the ground, reglar chilled and pinin' for a drop of somethink 'ot, rather than run in debt or spend the money as we couldn't afford for a drop of rum, as I considers a 'olesome drink in moderation, as will warm you up wonderful. But as to that, there's parties as 'as principles, and parties as 'asn't none; and them as aint 'onest will always be after a robbery, one way or the other, for I well remembers a party as was a reglar thief, tho' she were not in

want for anythink, and stole my muff as I left behind at 'er 'ouse, thro' drinkin' tea there along with Mrs. Padwick, and come away in a 'urry, and when I sent for it, said as she 'adn't see nothink of it, a good-for-nothink false'ood; for when I went to take off my bonnet, I remembers as well as if it was yesterday, as I took and laid it on 'er bed, as she took it off agin, a-sayin' "Escuse me, as it's my clean counterpin, fresh on to-day!" as were a gross false'ood, and only a escuse, for it's my opinion as she took and 'id that muff. So when she said as she'd never see it, I 'ad my own opinion, but kep my tung within my teeth, as the sayin' is, till next winter, when I met 'er with it on 'er 'ands, full-butt in Kensinton Gardings, one Sunday. I see 'er a-comin', and stood aside a bit till I could get a good look at the muff, and knowed as I could indemnify it; and then I stepped out, all of a sudden, and said, "Oh! how d'ye do? so you've found it for me!" and took 'old of the muff.

She says, "Wotever do you mean—I don't know you?"

I says, "Never mind about not knowing me, so long as you gives me my property."

She says, "Wot property?"

I say, "Why, my muff!"

She says, "Why, this muff was my own dear mother's!"

I says, "Oh! indeed; I never knew as you was dorter to Lady Wittles, as this muff belonged to, and give it to me, and here's 'er name inside, worked in white silk!" And I took and turned the muff inside out, and, sure enough, there was "M. A. Wittles" on the linin'.

"Ah!" she says, "then you stole it from 'er?"

"No," I says, "rong again! for 'er o vn dorter give it me, arter 'er death, as is livin' now close agin the Cristshul Pallis."

She says, "Take the rotten old thing, as is full of moth; and it's my belief as you took away my muff the evenin' as you drunk tea with me, and left this old thing behind you."

I says, "It's a pity, mum, as you don't 'ave respectable parties to tea. But," I says, "you'd better speak to Mrs. Padwick about that, as it was thro' 'er as I come to know you." And away I turns, with my muff in my 'and, as I was glad to get thro' bein' sable-tails, as I 'ad done up to look as good as new; but kep' the linin'—leastways the middle on it, with Lady Wittles's name as plain as a pikestaff, as the sayin' is.

It is 'ard work for 'onest folks to live now-a-days, even for them as is industrious; and as to Stores, I've knowed them as a little credit 'ave been the savin' on afore now, for when you comes to pay ready money for everythink, it dips deep into your

little all, for your 'and is never out of your pocket from mornin' till night, tho' when once you've got in debt you're up to your neck in it afore you can turn round, and no doubt parties as can get tick is often led to bein' extravagint in 'avin' things as they really don't want, and could do without, for there was poor young Mr. Edley, as 'is father were not rich, with a struggle to make both ends meet, that young man owed over five hundred pounds, thro' bein' put into the army and out-runnin' the constable, as the sayin' is, like young Tompkin as were fined five pounds for boltin' from the perlice; though in course any young man would run for it, to try and give a Bobby the slip if he could, thro' not wishin' to appear in the papers, for 'is father to read over 'is breakfast, as might lead to words if not blows, as aint pleasant things in families, partikler where tempers is short as piecrust, as sometimes 'appens; for I knowed Mr. Pellins, as were that 'asty in 'is temper, and would take and smash everythink on the table one after the another, if he were put out over 'is meals.

But as to Corporation Stores, we all knows as corporations can do almost anythink, partikler with the Lord Mare at the 'ead of 'em like London, as were 'ow Lady Wittles's pa, as cut up rich thro' 'avin' made 'is money all thro' cart-grease, as proved a fat lot, and might 'ave eat gold if she'd 'ave

fancied it, tho' 'eavier than lead, as is wot Mrs. Weldin's batter puddin's was like, as she would 'ave under a leg of mutton, as is a deal too tallowy for me, and did ought to be roast beef; and as to 'er pancakes, I'd as lief eat shoe-leather, as she made with snow, as she would 'ave was equal to eggs, so all as I said was then eat 'em yourself and give me eggs.

But really the ways as some parties goes on, you'd think as they was rollin' in gold and silver, for I'm sure there was young Prentiss, as 'is grandfather were a drysalter, and left a tidy bit of money, as were diwided among 'em, and a pretty thing for each. Well, he goes and marries Miss Belto, as 'ad five 'undred pounds in the Counsels, as Brown says is the same as the Nashunal Debt, and would 'ave kep' 'er in clothes if she'd 'ave kep' 'er own counsels; but, law, no, she took and drored it all out, and, bless you, furnished a house with them things in sweets, as you may see all over the place, for drorin'-rooms and dinin'-rooms, with a bedroom throwed in for ten guineas; and there she was with 'er 'air turned yaller, dressed out like any peacock at 'ome, and would walk in the Park, a-'opin' to ketch the Prince of Wales by the eye; and if he 'ad 'ave cast it that way he'd only 'ave thought 'er a idjot, as I told 'er own aunt, when she said to me as she were sure as the Prince 'ad looked at 'er niece.

"Well," I says, "and why not; he must look at some object, and there's lots on 'em about, and,' I says, "wot if he did look at 'er, he'd only think as she was a-idlin' of 'er time a-walkin' there, when she'd better be at 'ome a-darnin' of 'er stockin's, with three children under five."

"Oh!" she says, "she's such a beauty."

I says, "Rubbish about beauty, there's very few beauties in this world, and if people aint got money behind their beauty, they'd better not be a-showin' of it off all over the place, and cuttin' a dash upon nothink, as is sure to come to a bad end;" and true my words proved, for if she didn't take and bolt with a party as 'ad been a corn-cutter, and passed 'isself off for a Germin Baron, and was in them swindlin' forrin lotteries, as were nabbed one fine day, and put in quod over there, and she come 'ome to 'er aunt as 'ad brought 'er up, and took to shop-liftin', as ended in penal servitude, and serve 'er right; and as to 'er 'usban' he were always a poor 'aporth of cheese, he died thro' drink, and only left one child, a hinfant, and thro' berryin' two, behind, as 'is mother took and won't let it know it ever 'ad any parints; as shows as corporations is all right, because if them two fools couldn't 'ave got no credit they couldn't 'ave set up all that sham Abram way of goin' on.

But, law bless me, if people was only to 'ave

wot they can pay for, you wouldn't see so many parties cuttin' the swell as you do, with their carridges and 'orses, and takin' furnished 'ouses in the season, as they calls it, and doin' the dash, and all on nothink, as is the way the parties as lived next door to Mrs. Padwick come to get their dorters married. Not as they turned out much of matches, for one were one were only a bill-broker, and the other in the Custom 'Ouse, as is a-goin' down lower every day thro' this 'ere free trade. The bill-broker, he took and busted, as is their reglar way, thro' a-puttin' on the pot, as they called it. And the Custom 'Ouse clerk, arter livin' swell six months, come down to a lodgin' in Walworth, as ain't a fashionable part now, since they've took away the Surrey Gardins, and the Elefant and Castle aint a place as swells puts up at no longer, as they did used to when the Brighton coach were drove by a barrynet, as my own aunt 'ave set behind over and over agin, as took 'is tips and 'andled the reins jest the same as tho' he'd been born a coachman. So I'm sure if these 'ere Stores puts a stop to parties a-goin' in for tick everywheres, and cuttin' a dash on other people's property, why, they certingly are fine things.

But poor Mrs. Trimley, she come in as pale as hashes, a-shakin' in every limb, as is a woman as sticks to 'er Church, and 'ad words with her own

dorter, as married a Baptist, and turned up her nose wisible durin' the ceremony, as were Spurgin's Tabbynacle, as is licensed for marridges, tho' Mrs. Trimley never considered it a lorful marridge, and sed as she'd as soon 'ave jumped over a broomstick at Gretny Green, as is the Scotch way. Well, poor soul, she come in to tea, and says, a-chokin' with sobs, "Oh, Mrs. Brown, I've 'ad sich a blow!"

I says, "I 'opes not in a wulnerable part, thro' any of them street-boys, as is reglar pests, wot with their tipcats and cattypulks all over the place."

"No," she says, "it's a moril blow as I've ad."

"Well," I says, "that's a mussy, for them boys aint got no morils, and 'its right and left, and might be your eye out afore you could look round. But," I says, "who's give it you?"

"Oh!" she says, "as ever I should live to see it, as is the last straw as 'ave broke the cabman's back!"

I says, "Lor! you don't say so! I shouldn't 'ave thought as a load of straw would 'ave done it."

"Oh!" she says, "I'm a-speakin' figgerytiv', as our minister is so fond on in the pulpit."

"Oh!" I says, "I don't 'old with them mounty-bank tricks, a-cuttin' of figgers in a place of wuship, as is like Rolling 'Ill, as did use to slide down the banisters of 'is pulpit, to show 'ow parties slipped into perdishun."

"No," she says, "our minister aint like that, thro' bein' a 'onerable and rivyrind, as 'is father were a real lord, and 'as a West-end chapel, where they don't begin till arf-past eleven o'clock of a Sunday, and always closes it for two months in the ortum for cleanin' and decoratin', as makes it conwenient for all parties, cos our minister in gen'ral goes with 'is good lady to the continong, and sends the nusses and five children to Broadstairs, as is a quiet place. But," she says, "wot puts me out is to think of them clergy a-openin' a Corporation Store on their own 'ook."

I says, "Never! What!" I says, "you mean to say as a Bishop will be seen in 'is apron and sleeves a-goin' about and a-wayin' out goods like any butterman, and them poor curates bein' sent out with the goods, as is now delivered free of espense." I says, "It cannot be."

"Yes," says Mrs. Trimley; "and, wot's more, they're all a-goin' to swear as they'll stick to one another, and never deal anywheres else, as will ruin all the small dealers."

"Well," I says, "I've 'eard say as parsons aint never good men of busyness, and 'owever should they be, as will no doubt get that confused in their 'eads, as will be cheatin' theirselves in both weight and measure, thro' bein' that kind-'arted, as they'll never refuse to give credit to a poor child as is sent

for a loaf and arf-a-quartern of butter, with two ounces of tea and a arf of miste sugar, let alone firewood and arf a 'undred of coals, partikler with a tale of distress throwed in, and mother'll be sure to pay when father comes in, as she knows all the time will be two in the mornin', and that beastly state of intoxication as will 'ave reglar drained 'im of every fardin, as will lead to a black eye and the baby throwed into the coals, as 'appened round the corner, the week afore last, as he got three months for, as wasn't no comfort to that poor creetur as is left to support five out of a apple-stall, as is 'ard lines, with a infant at the breast. But, law bless you! there's thousins as is a-sufferin' wuss than that as don't never meet the eye as is a-lookin' out for objics of charity as is often too soft-'arted and took in by them impostors as makes up a pitiful tale afore a magistrate, and so gets noticed in the papers, as is that good-natured, and gets up subscriptions for thousins in a minnit, cos in course a noosepaper 'ave only got to say arf a word, and parties shells out that liberal; not as I 'olds with a-givin' a lot of money to a family cos the father's been and murdered a feller-workman as 'ave done 'im a 'rong; cos tho' it may be all right, yet, in my opinion, a man as'll take and murder 'is feller-creetur as he's got a grudge agin, he aint much good; not but wot in a

genral way workmen is werry good friends, cos look how 'ard they tried to get that feller off as 'ad murdered 'is mother, and were found guilty, tho' whyever the jury ever recommended that willin to mercy, I can't think; and whyever he wasn't 'anged, as he did ought to 'ave been, if guilty and if not guilty, he did ought to have been set free; cos, if he 'anged the poor old soul arter ill-treatin' and robbin' 'er constant, why, 'angin' was too good for 'im, a black-'arted monster; but if she took and 'anged 'erself, even tho' it was thro' 'is bad treatment, he didn't ought to 'ave been sent to penal servitude for that. In my opinion, it would be a good thing, when a man is tried for 'is life, to do away with them hignorant juries, and let there be three judges, and if they say he did ought to 'ang, why, then, 'ang 'im, and don't let no noosepapers, nor yet meetin's nor petitions, interfere; and as to 'angin' men in private, I don't 'old with that. I'd 'ave 'em took out to some lonely place, miles out of town, and there be 'ung in a open field, so as they could be seen, without no crowd bein' let come within arf a mile of the place. Cos I'm sure as it does strike them ruffyans with 'orrer to see their pals strung up, partikler as they knows as commutin' of a sentence means twenty years in prison, so that there's many a murderer as will be let out agin in

the prime of life. I consider as a man who commits murder is wuss than a wild beast, and did ought to be either put out of the world or caged up for life. But, bless my 'art! there's Miss Pilkinton been at a lecture where the party said as murder come nat'ral to some, thro' 'avin' bumps in their 'eads as drove 'em to it."

"Well then," I says, "more shame for them, as didn't have them bumps cured, cos if they can't help it they didn't ought to be punished, any more than anyone as is born with a squint bein' scolded for not workin' straight; but, law, them afflicted parties often does better than them as 'ave got their senses; for I knowed a young man as were deaf and dumb, but rote a lovely 'and, and so got into a office from ten to four. Well, one day it so 'appened as a reglar old screamin' Tartar of a chap come to that office to ask a question, and fell in with this poor deaf and dumb boy, as in course couldn't understand 'im, tho' he did 'oller at 'im like mad, and then not gettin' a anser at once, bounced out of the place and rote a letter all of a fury, to complain to the 'eads of that office about a dumb party bein' employed, as in course inquired about this poor feller, as turned out to be one of the best clerks as they'd got, and so got promotion all along of that old feller tryin' for to get 'im sacked."

But, as I were a-sayin' to Brown the other night over supper, it seems to me as tho' them as does the wust things, gets the most pity and 'elp too, as is better than pity; but of all the 'ard things as ever I did know, it was poor Mrs. Peltoe, as come in to a little property thro' a aunt a-dyin' intestined, as they calls it, as she took and bought a 'ouse and furniture with, and was doin' werry nice with lettin' to single gents, when parties turned up, as was Mrs. Peltoe's own sisters, as the aunt owed money to, and took and filed their bills afore the Lord Chancery, as must be a bad lot, thro' 'avin' a lot of vices about 'im; one of them took and attacked poor Mrs. Peltoe unawares, and forced 'er to throw up the 'ole lot, or else go to prison for life, if she 'adn't died in a armshouse, tho' if ever there was a 'armless woman in this world it was 'er, thro' bein' crippled with roomatics in the elbers, so 'ad to give up 'er mangle, as was a 'umble crust, tho' only threeapence a dozen, as is werry much gone out, escept for table-cloths and napkins, as nothing won't put the gloss on like a turn in the mangle, as was werry nigh Peltoe's death, thro' a-ketchin' of 'is fingers a-tryin' to pull somethink straight, while the boy as was turnin' of it 'ad 'is back to 'im, and not near enough to kick thro' bein' stone deaf and a idjot, but as strong as an ox in the arms, and werry nigh crushed the old

man's fingers to a jelly, as nearly turned to lock jaws in the hend.

But as to Corporation Stores I likes the truth. Not as I've got any reason to speak up for them, for I shan't never forgit a-goin' to the Civil Service, not as I wanted anythink partikler myself, but thro' Mrs. Padwick 'avin' of a ticket, 'er and me agreed to go together, but when the time come she were that drove thro' fresh lodgers a-comin' in, as I says to 'er, "As you're that busy, I'll go alone," and so I did. Of all the confusin' places as ever I did know it's them Stores; and as to civil, they wasn't a bit more civil than fust-class shops, as always serves you that perlite, from a Duchess upwards, but wot with bein' sent to one place for one thing, and another for another, it's that confusin', and then, a-waitin' to 'ave to pay, as is wot I can't abear, for when I goes a-shoppin' wot I likes is down with my money and up with my change, with coppers put in a bit of paper, as they did always used to, and not a naughty shop gal almost a-throwin' 'em at you, and 'ardly givin' of you a civil anser, if you only goes in for a penny bun, as she'll 'and you in 'er fingers, with 'ands that grimy and 'er 'air all untidy, like a shop as I went into the other day up in the City, and asked for a bit of cold 'am with bread and butter, as were that salt and 'ard, let alone the dirt, that I paid the money as were six-

pence, and walked out without a-touchin' of it; cos tho' no doubt there's more places where you can get something to eat now-a-days, the things aint a patch on wot they did used to be.

I'm sure as everythink is changed for the wuss, and as to some things they're reglar out of date, like pickle salmon, as did used to come from Newcastle, in kits, the same as coals, as there wasn't no salmon like it; and you might 'ave knocked me down with a feather, as the sayin' is, when I asked for it at a old-fashioned shell-fish shop in Fleet Street, as I've knowed ever since I can recollect anythink, and they told me it was quite give up, as give me quite a turn, partikler jest arter seein' the end of Temple Bar, as them 'igeous Law Courts 'ave been and knocked down; but that's the way of the world, and it's no use frettin' over it, but I can't abear to see the old places all swep' away like a wortex, and all these here new-fangled things a-startin' up; not but wot I must say as there's a many things as is great improvements, partikler busses, as is a great conwenience, for I well remembers a-walkin' from Church Street, Chelsea, to Islin'ton, when a growed-up gal, and not a chance of even a lift, as cost a shillin' a mile in a 'ackney coach, tho' in course if there was four it did give you a rest, as the longest shillin's worth I've 'eard say was from the top of Sloane Street to

Coventry Street; but then there was a turnpike to pay at 'Igh Park Corner, jest by St. George's 'Ospital, and the langwidge as the coachmen did used to use when they 'ad to take that fare was enuf to bring destruction on coach and horses and all.

Then certingly railways is wonderful, and as to the telegraph, in course I believes it, cos I sees it, but can't 'ardly believe as there aint some 'under-'and trick about it; but as to this 'lectric light, it's reglar blindin' work, and nobody couldn't set in the room with it, I'm sure; tho' as they says it ain't 'arf done yet, we must wait to see 'ow it will turn out in the hend. I must say as I do 'ope as they won't make it no stronger, or we shall all be in the 'Sylum for the Indignant Blind afore we dies, as did used to be over the water, close agin where Bedlam stands, as was moved from Moor-fields, close agin where the undergrounded railway comes out, as 'ave swep' away Long Alley and Broad Street Buildin's, as is where Alderman Wittles 'ad 'is 'ouse when my dear mother fust washed for 'em, as lived 'erself at 'Aggerstone, afore she moved to Battersea Rise, thro' 'avin' a cottage left 'er with a good bit of gardin, as was jest the place for dryin', as is wot 'ave made Brown and me that comfortable thro' a-sellin' of it to the gas-works, as is another great improvement.

I must say as I shall be sorry when Battersea Bridge and old Chelsea Church is swep' away, along with the Red 'Ouse and pigeon matches, as did used to belong to the Catherlics, and well I remembers Cremorne Gardins a private 'ouse, tho' shet up when I was a gal, and is done away now altogether, and 'igh time, for the rows as there was all about there of a night was like Bedlam broke loose all along the King's Road, and even all up Sloane Street.

I must say as Stores is werry 'andy places for gettin' everythink as you wants at once, and not goin' from shop to shop; and as I were a-sayin', a nice list Mrs. Padwick give me to bring 'ome, as took me close on three 'ours to get together, as was mostly trifles, tho' there was bars of soap and cheese, with a bladder of lard and a gammon of bacon, and I bought a bit of baccy for Brown, with some threads, and tapes, and shirt-buttons, and then there was some note-paper and antelopes, and note-paper stamped for Miss Pilkinton, with tea, and sugar, and pearl-barley, and some 'ouse flannin and dusters, with a bottle of blackin', and a set of brushes, as made a good-sized parcel altogether, tied up in brown paper, as were that 'eavy that I give a boy a penny to carry to the omnibus for me, as would 'old it by the string, tho' I kep' a-tellin' on 'im not to. A many of the busses was full, and at last I 'ailed

one as there was jest room in, but when I got in I was a-goin' to take my parcel of the boy the conductor says,

"You can't take that inside."

I says, "I must."

He says, "You shan't. Why, you'll want to take a four-post bed, furnitur and all, in with you next." So he says, "Either you come out or 'ave this 'ere lot put outside."

"Certingly," says a blue-nosed old baboon as were a-settin' by the door; "I daresays it's dirty linen, and might spread disease."

Well, it was jest on tea-time, and I was in a 'urry to get back. So I says, "Put it on the roof," and down I sets between that blue-nosed party—a reglar old winegar-wisaged party as 'ad jest come from Exeter 'All with two mishunaries as was that plump as the werry sight on 'em would make them 'ungry savidge's mouths water. The blue-nosed party wouldn't make no room for me, and the winegar-wisaged fieldmale give a pull at 'er gownd as I couldn't 'elp a-settin' on, and I 'eard 'er gathers give way under 'er, tho' I didn't say a word.

I thought, in goin' along 'arf a-dozin', as I were a-settin' on somethink as didn't seem firm. When we stopped at the Circus, the old blue-nosed party as got out says,—

"Confound the woman, if you aint been a-settin' on my sassages all the way."

"Well," I says, "why didn't you move more civil when I got in, and then you'd 'ave seen where they was. But," I says, "bless my 'art if it aint a-goin' to begin to rain." I says, "Give me my parcel."

The bus were a-goin' on and the conductor didn't 'ear me, so I gets up and gives a pull at 'im by the arm, and if he didn't take and drop off that little perch wot they stands right down into the mud, werry near a-sprawlin' full length. He jumps on the step agin in an instant, and called me anythink but a lady thro' the winder, a-sayin' as if I wanted my parcel I must get out.

I says, "Let me out then. I'll 'ave a cab, else everythink will be ruined with this rain."

Out I gets, he swings my parcel off the roof by the string into my harms, as broke with the shock, and there was all my things dropped in the mud, there was one thing a-rollin' one way and another another, and all them boys and cadgers a-comin' to 'elp me. I says, "Call me a cab," as wasn't to be 'ad for two or three minnits, and when I got in the cabby wouldn't 'ave the brown paper put in thro' it's bein' that muddy and torn, so I 'ad to take the things out, as some he wouldn't 'ave on the seats, and 'owever I got any on 'em I can't think, and I lost the bladder

of lard, and the baccy and tea broke loose and was all over the place, and the bit of bacon 'ad lewanted, and when I got to Mrs. Padwick's I was pretty nigh wild, and the cabby that impident over a shillin' as was over 'is fare, and I was a good twelve shillin's out of pocket, and Brown said as he tried the baccy and didn't like it, so it wasn't no loss, and the tea wasn't a patch on wot I got from our reglar man, tho', I must say, I pays 'im four shillin's, and only 'arf-a-crown at the Stores, so it aint to be espected so good. I don't fancy no tea now-a-days equal to eight shillin' mixed as I did used to get in Fleet Street; and there's a-many things besides as aint got the flaviour as they did used to 'ave, partikler 'ams, as is now little better than gammons of bacon, and as to meat it aint a patch on what it did used to be, and now we get sich lots of forrin wegetables as aint got no taste, partikler sparrergrass, peas, and new pertaters; and as to fruit, I never touches it; and as to them can things they aint a bit like natur. Ah! everythink is gettin' over-done, partikler poppylation, as is that increased that there soon wont be no feedin' people at all; and it's lucky we're a-findin' out new places to send people to, and get eatables from, or we should all be starvin' or eatin' one another's 'eads off, cos, tho' it's all werry fine to talk agin Stores, but we must all live, and in course get things as cheap as possible, cos as it is a sovrin

now-a-days don't get as far as it did, as is the reason as Queen Wictorier is always a-talkin' to Parlymint about economy, as is werry proper, but didn't ought to be carried too far, cos, as Brown says, there is sich a thing as false economy, and savin' at the spiggot and lettin' out at the bung, as always is a losin' game, partikler with them as 'ave got money, as is like dressin' on the land, as it aint no good unless you spreads it about, and it's much better for to employ parties tho' it is only at fancy trades than 'ave to support them as paupers, as brings them down in the world, and they loses their self-respects, and turns 'ippercrits and attends chapels, so as to get money out of pious parties as is that tender-'arted, and gives away their money as they never misses, and fancies as they're a-doin' good, as is only a herror in judgment and no sin, but does a deal of 'arm.

I must say as some shopkeepers don't deserve to be supported, as gives theirselves sich hairs, and thinks as they can do jest as they pleases; but, as I say to Mr. Oldin, as 'ad made a fortune in the tripe and trotter line, and bought 'isself a willer out by Camblin Town way, and give our gal a cow-'eel as were tainted, and wouldn't change it; so I puts on my bonnet, and took it back myself, and I says, "Mr. Oldin, when you're too rich to be civil," I says, "you'd better throw up your tripe and trot-

ters, and leave others a chance to make a livin' out of 'em."

He were werry civil to me, a-sayin' as that cow-'eel were a oversight; and he'd better 'ave been, cos I should 'ave give 'im a bit of my mind, as remembered 'is mother a-drivin' a barrow, and sellin' tripe about Pentonwille 'Ill when I were a little gal, and stoppin' along with a aunt of my dear mother's, as lived in the Bagnigge Wells Road, as did used to tell me about its bein' a fashionable tea-gardin when King George were King. All the beauty and swells of the day did used to come and drink tea of a Sunday evenin' and listen to the orgin as did used to be played; the same as I remembers the White Condick 'Ouse myself; not as they 'ad any orgin, and was considered wicked of a Sunday evenin' anywheres out of church, tho' I do jest remember a werry old gent as did used to 'ave 'is rubber of a Sunday night, but always locked the door, thro' 'is 'ousekeeper bein' a follerer of Rollin 'Ill, as 'ad a chapel in the Blackfriars Road, as was a real gentleman, for all that tho' some parties considered as he let 'isself down through bein' a descender; tho' I've always 'eard as he were a good man for all that, and did used to cut jokes in the pulpit to keep people awake while he was a-preachin', as was a 'art as he were a master on. But my grandmother she quite well remembered

when it were not thought sinful to amuse yourself on a Sunday, tho', in course, nobody as is decent would want to be a-gettin' up no rows, escept them Bradlaws and sich like, with their High Park meetin's for to get that feller Orton out; but there always was fools, and always will be, or else 'owever would the rogues get a livin', as is 'ard work nowadays, even for a parson; and there's many a 'onest man a-starvin' all over the place, whilst clever waggerbones makes fortins, and rides in their carridges, a-livin' on the fat of the land out of other peoples' pockets.

But law there's no tellin' who or wot is a-goin' to succeed in this world, for I remembers parties when I was a gal as 'adn't 'ardly a shoe to their foot, as 'ave got on that wonderful thro' blackin'-paste or pills, and died with a title as they never espected; and then there's some as starts well in life, with everythink as they can desire, as 'ave died in the workus, but in gen'ral 'ave 'ad only themselves to thank for it, tho' some 'ave come to ruin thro' bein' 'onest, and, tho' they may be called fools, 'as the satisfaction of knowin' as they 'ave done the right thing; cos I well remembers 'earin' speak of a party as were a banker, and lived like a lord, with carridges and 'orses, and come to grief thro' misfortin, as give up everythink as he 'ad in the world, and died in a garret up Paddin'ton way, and

wouldn't never except no favours from any one but one relation as allowed 'im a pound a week, as was more than he asked, and he give 'arf-a-crown of that to 'elp the widow of a old servint as he 'ad meant to 'ave perwided for in 'is will. Ah! thank goodness there is good people left in the world still, as was always a scarce article; tho' I must say as parties seems to get wuss, but Brown says it only seems so thro' heverything bein' put in the papers, as may be all werry well, but it's like edication as puts parties up to things as they wouldn't never 'ave thought on if others 'adn't told 'em 'ow to do it.

Mrs. Walby she's that full of 'orrers as she makes my werry blood cuddle up in 'eaps, as will set and gloat over that party as were biled down in 'er own copper at Richmund, and the other field-male as were found quick-limed in 'er own coal-cellar, as is both werry under'anded ways of goin' on; and I'm sure, talk of doin' away with 'angin', wot they've got to do is to do away with murders fust, as gits wuss and wuss every day, and aint never brought 'ome to nobody, tho' murder will out, as the sayin' is, whether it's a copper-'ole or a coal-'ole; but wot we wants is the murderers out, and then 'ang 'em like dogs; not but wot in course even a mad dog's a deal better than a murderer, thro' not a-knowin' wot he's about, and didn't give

'isself the idrerfobier, as come nat'ral, the same as distemper, and the werry thought on it is enuf to drive you mad with fright, as knowin' as there aint no cure for it, but must hend in bein' smothered atween two feather-beds, as I've 'eard my dear mother talk about, as were a lady of rank, and bit in the lip by 'er own lap-dog in play, as in my opinion is disgustin' things, as wouldn't let no one belongin' to me never nuss no dogs, as the floor is the proper place for, not but wot they might bite you all the same for that, so you must run your chance, cos in my opinion mad dogs is like drunkards, they always was and always will be, and the sooner they're knocked on the 'ead the better; not as I 'olds as there's parties as can't 'elp gettin' drunk, cos that's all rubbish, they could 'elp it if they pleased, and if they didn't like it they wouldn't do it, but they gives in to that devil sperrits, and he soon gets to be master on 'em; and in a gen'ral way it's all along of idleness, as is the parint of every wice, as the sayin' is; cos tho' a party might be overtook by 'ot weather, or over work, and give in to a extra pint, or even 'arf-a-quartern, there aint no occasion for to make a beast of yourself, as goin' out a-pleasurin' aint no escuse for, as is downright foolishness the way as parties goes on when out for a day's 'ollyday, as only means a-goin' from public-'ouse to public-'ouse,

as is why I 'olds with theayters and sich like places, where you can't get drink every instant, as distracts your mind, and fills up the time, the same as picters and sich-like, partikler Madam Tussor's, as is a reglar lesson with Kings and Queens all over the place; but why they don't put Old 'Arry and 'is dorter Betsey in the Chamber of 'Orrers there with the other murderers, I can't think, 'cos for my part I 'ates murders, as aint amusin' in a general way, tho' they are so fond on 'em at theayters, where they'll show you five or six durin' the evenin', and all done in cold blood, as don't amuse me; for as I says, when I do go out, I likes to enjoy myself over a good larf, and that's why, years ago, I did say as I never wouldn't see none of them deep tragydes no more, as is that 'art-rendin', and gives you the jumps for to see your fellow-creatures run thro' in cold blood, as must be wilful murder, and not done in a angry moment, not as I 'olds with makin' them escuses for murders, a-sayin' as there weren't no permeditashun, as is rubbish, partikler when a man goes and kills a party as either he's got a grudge agin, or as he wants to rob; and as to 'is bein' in licker bein' any escuse, why, wotever is easier than for a man as is goin' to commit a murder, for to go and get tight so as to work 'isself up to the job, and then when it's done no doubt he's sorry to find as he's put a 'alter round 'is neck, and then begins to talk pious

and get it put in the papers 'ow beautiful he spoke, and wrote lovely letters, and 'ow affectin' it were the way as he took leaf of 'is family, and 'is little gal a-clingin' to 'im, and all that twaddle, and 'ow he took 'is meals reglar, and slep' well at nights, and listened that attentive to the chaplin, as is all werry well, but nothink to the public, any more than that he eat a 'arty breakfast jest afore he was 'ung, as is all rubbish in my opinion, 'cos when a man's condemned to die let 'im be left alone to prepare isself, and as to bein' took leaf of I can't see no good in it, as is only distractin' 'isself and others with grief; for I'm sure if I was goin' to be 'ung, I'd keep it all to myself, and shouldn't wish them as loves me to come, and be made miserable over my last dyin' speech and confession, as did used to be all made up, and was only 'umbug; but as to parties a-sayin' as a man can't commit a murder, and then go directly after and do the pious at the Young Man's Christian 'Sociation, why, it's just wot a willin as is a 'ippercrit would do, cos I remember a young willin as, no doubt, murdered a gal somewhere's over the water, and got off thro' their not bein' able to bring it 'ome to 'im. He were a model of piousness, he were, and quoted Scripture beautiful, a-goin' to his church when he got off, and the minister a-takin' 'is part, and all the while he was known to be a young waggerbone, and 'ad

murdered the gal to purvent 'is bein' found out, as will be sure to come home to 'im some day. And then look at that Wainwright, and old Torwell the Quaker, who murdered the wretched woman years ago at Slough, as was 'ung by the 'lectric tellygraft, as follered 'im up to town like a reglar 'ippercrit. If you aint never goin' to 'ang anyone but them as is cort in the werry hact, why, there'll be more murders than ever, with the bodies made away with. Not but wot in course the law is quite right in givin' the prisoner the adwantage of the doubt, as would in a general way 'ang most on 'em. I've a 'orrer of all them sanguin ways myself; and as to go a-pleasurin', I can't say as I cares about them Shakespeare's plays, as is so full of murders, as they quite gives me a turn, and shan't never forget that reglar slorter-'ouse, as it was in that there Amlick, when they killed the King and Queen, and all the rest of the royal family, afore my eyes, with some of them lords-in-waitin' throwed in, with a funeral performed on the stage, as give me that orful turn, that I couldn't abear the name of a theayter for ever so long; and 'ow people can go and see Amlick murdered night after night I can't think; and yet I knows a party as 'ave went five times, as shows that some takes a pleasure in seein' them orful exhibishuns, as is wuss than Madam Tussor's Chamber of 'Orrers. So, when Miss Pil-

kinton says to me, "Mrs. Brown, did ever you see Romulus and Julia?" I says, "Not as I'm awares on." "Oh!" she says, "come and see it along with me." I says, "I 'ope it aint one of them deep things, as is too orful." "Oh!" she says, "it's all about love and sich like." "Oh!" I says, "I'm too old for love," and could 'ave said, "and so are you too," only didn't, cos it would 'ave 'urt 'er feelin's, as is still a-'ankerin' arter a journeyman baker up 'Oxton way, as walks with a limp, and a wall eye. So I says, "Them theayter's so 'ot, and it's so late." "Oh!" she says, "it's to be daytime arter dinner." "Well," I says, "I don't mind, then," and off she went; but I was sorry the next minnit as I'd said I'd go, for I were obligated to 'ave dinner at 'arf-past twelve, and jump up with it in my throat, as the sayin' is; and tho' the day were cool, not to say cold, and the bus from the corner put me down within five minnits of the place, yet for all that I shouldn't never 'ave went but for Miss Pilkinton, as said as the young lady as were a-goin' to act were a customer, and 'ad give 'er two tickets, as was for the upper circles; so in course it were quite genteel, partikler bein' daylight, as stops a deal of skylarkin', thro' nearly all them young chaps as gives into their ways bein' at work, as is a good thing, tho' I do like young people to 'ave their amusements, if only merry and wise over 'em,

as the sayin' is; and we all knows as all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Not as I considers as plays is good things as a 'abit, cos some on 'em 'olds up wice to boys and gals, and I've 'eard say as some on 'em goes about that undressed, as they ain't common decent, let alone orful colds as they ketches; but as I told Miss Pilkinton as I would go for to be 'er purtecter, and I didn't want to be wuss than my word, tho' I'm sure she don't want no purtecter, nor yet likely to get a nat'ral one now; for I do believe as the baker is a-fightin' shy, as is fifty-three if a 'our, and she'll never see forty-eight no more in this world, tho' she does talk about thirty-eight, as certingly sounds better for a bride, tho' I do 'ope as she won't be married in a wail, if ever it should come off, as I 'as my doubts on; for I shan't never forget Mrs. Bilcher, as wore one when married to 'er third, as come off, 'air and wreath and all, thro' gettin' ketched in the 'inge of the halter, and there she stood, with 'er 'ead as bare as a Dutch cheese, afore that young man as she were a-marryin', thro' bein' 'er potman, as busted out into a reglar 'orse-larf, as made the minister frown, and the clerk, tho' he couldn't 'elp smilin', 'oller out, "'Ush!" while the pew-opener was a-'elpin' set the old idjot right, and in 'er fluster put the 'ole bag of tricks on 'ind part before, and got it in that mess, so as she 'ad to

be married with a pocket-'ankercher tied over 'er bare pole, with every one in the church a-sniggerin'. And when they got 'ome to 'er 'ouse, there was a telegraff a-waitin' to say as her 'usban must go to Norfolk to see 'is dyin' mother. So 'is bride said as she'd go too, as he says, "All right," with a smile; but by the time as she'd 'ad 'er weddin' dinner, and topped up champain with 'ot rum and water, she 'ad to be carried to bed insensible, as, in my opinion, was drugged by that young woman at the bar; so he went off without 'er, and never come back till the day arter 'er death, as was within six months, and then took and proved 'er will, as left 'im everythink, and took and married that young fieldmale at the bar within three months, as lived a cat-and-dog life, and was sold up a little over the year, as I always espected would be their ends, cos deceit and false'oods in gen'ral comes 'ome to parties, and they was both a-playin' a game with poor old Mrs. Bilcher, as always was a fool, tho' quite old enuf to 'ave knowed better at 'er time of life, as was sixty-eight.

Talk of goin' to the theayter to be amused, why, of all the dismal 'oles as ever I did see it were that theayter as we went to by daylight, tho' the gas were lighted inside, as they may well call Dreary Lane, as once did used to stand in the fields, the same as St. Martin's Church, as jined on to St. Giles's, as was

all fields, wot they called the subbugs, as the French calls the ongvirongs. I met Miss Pilkinton and 'er baker at the door of the theayter, as is a man as I wouldn't 'ave looked at, not even if I'd been throwed on a dissulute 'ighland without another creatur to speak to, for he's a 'og in 'is manners, and addicted to rum, as he kep' a-takin' pulls out of a glass bottle as he 'ad in 'is 'andkercher, and never even passed the compliment of offerin' it to a lady; and as to Miss Pilkinton a-sayin' as he took it for somethink internal as he've 'ad all 'is life long, and would be 'is death some day, I says, "And that's a greedy disposition so I should say," as made 'er turn 'uffy when we got 'ome to my place, as I did not ask that baker to come with us, for he was decided a little bit on in the theayter, and then took and climbed into a 'Oxton bus in the Strand without ever even sayin' good-bye, as made Miss Pilkinton scream to see 'is 'ighlows slip over the top of the bus, and then she turns on me a-bustin' into tears, and a-sayin' as my unkind ways 'ad drove 'im to distraction. I thinks to myself so much the better, for all 'is carneyin' ways and wisperin's wile we was in the theayter ended in 'is borrerin' 'arf-a-crown of 'er, as I see 'er slip it into 'is 'and, and I don't believe as she's set eyes on 'im since, nor the 'arf-a-crown neither, and don't believe as ever she will to her dyin' day, for all 'is

flowery ways as she talks about, as is in course to be looked for in a baker, as spiles your things wuss than sut, for I've often 'eard say as you'd better run up agin a sweep than a baker. But as I were a-sayin', that there theayter was orful dismal, and as to the play, I couldn't make much out on it, tho' I were pleased with one young lady as 'ad been put out to nuss, and come 'ome to 'er parints over 'ead and ears in love with a young gent as was dreadful gone on 'er; as far as I could make out they'd 'ated one another once, but that was only lovers' quarrels, and they was tremenjous spoons, now as they'd made it up. The young lady's parints was quite agin 'er marryin' 'im, as was the 'ole family, and 'ad reglar street rows, as one or two on 'em was killed in; and in my opinion they didn't ought to let parties wear them swords as is that 'andy, and out they whips 'em and runs a party thro' in a jiffey, and that's 'ow one gent were killed as I did like, cos he were that lively, tho' he didn't ought to 'ave been that rude to the young lady's nuss, a-turnin' of 'er into redicule, as were a sort of a go-between, and managed to get that young couple married by a 'oly Friar, as in my opinion bein' a clergyman, didn't ought to 'ave took and mixed 'isself up in sich a busyness, as were a reglar meddlin' old feller, and made a nice mull of it in the hend; for he sent that young man for a sleepin'-draught to a miserable doctor's shop, and the doc-

tor, thro' bein' 'arf-starved and foolish, and that weak as he couldn't take down 'is shetters, and so, fumblin' in the dark, give that poor young man the rong stuff, no doubt; and as to the young woman, that Friar, he give her somethink to make 'er sleep, as she took an overdose on, and they took and berried 'er alive, all in 'er every-day clothes, as was werry beautiful silks and sattins; and the young man, a-hearin' of this, come for to get 'er out of 'er family wault, and he couldn't do that without a-killin' one of 'er friends as 'ad come to put flowers on 'er grave, as is a mark of respect as some shows even now-a-days, and in course didn't 'old with that young feller a-breakin' open the wault, as was like body-snatchin' ways. But, law! poor feller, he jest took a pull at that little bottle as that 'arf-starved doctor 'ad give 'im, and then he come a reglar cropper close agin the body, as woke up the corpse jest in time to see 'im die uncommon 'ard. So, as she 'eard parties a-comin', and didn't want no more rows, nor yet esplanations, as always makes things wuss, she took and stabbed 'erself, and died over 'is body, and then the curtin was dropped, and 'igh time, too; not as them two was really dead, tho' I can't speak about the others; but them two came forrard a-smilin' and a-bowin', as if nothink 'adn't 'appened; and I was glad to see 'em, and so was every one else, as clapped their

'ands, and took and shied bokeys at that young lady, as looked quite young and nat'ral, and not all painted up to the eyes, and lookin' that bold all about 'er, and I was glad, and cries out "Brayvo!" and 'it the floor with my umbreller; and tho' in course I didn't go to do it, ketched Miss Pilkinton's baker on 'is 'ighlow, as were 'is soft corn, as give a yell, and me a drive in the back, as a little more would 'ave sent me over into wot they calls the pit, and rushes out of the place, a-leavin' me and Miss Pilkinton to foller. Not as I'd 'ave follered the wulgar beast, but didn't want to lose Miss Pilkinton, so 'obbles arter 'er all down a street into the Strand, jest in time to see 'im a-strugglin' on to the 'bus, as were as much as he could do, as I'm sure 'ad took best part of a pint of rum, as the smell on made that theyater quite unbearable, let alone insultin', jeerin' remarks from parties a-settin' behind, as some on 'em talked about me bein' a punchion; and others said we was all pine-apple flavour, as I think were illudin' to Miss Pilkinton's 'andkercher, as were all pachuly and that rank 'air grease, as is bergymot, as I can't abear, partikler when put in for to 'ide the castor-oil as they still uses in them 'air-greases. But I must say, all said and done, I'm glad I've see that "Romulus and Julia," tho' Miss Pilkinton will 'ave it as 'is name were Romyer and the young lady's Juleyet; but,

'owever that may be, they was a ill-used couple all round, and did ought to be a warnin' to young parties not to make up their runaway matches, and old nusses not to lend theirselves to sich ways, nor yet doctors and clergymen to interfere in them family quarrels, as that young lady were reglar dragged into, for she didn't look like one to quarrel, nor yet disobey 'er parents, tho' I must say as the way 'er pa went on was enuf to prowoke a saint. I do 'ope as that there Shakespear will write some play where parties is made 'appy at the hend. Miss Pilkinton, she were a-sayin' as it would be no use if he did, cos noboby wouldn't act it, for all they cares about at them theyaters is things took from the French, as certingly is werry clever over all them things for the theyaters; and in course if the Inglish is duffers at 'ritin' plays, why then give the French the job; not but wot a play as I see over in Paris were anythink but drunkenness and beastly ways, as far as I could make out, and another was all parties with 'ardly a rag of clothes to their backs, as made me shiver agin to look at 'em, and I must say as they danced beautiful, tho' too much legs for me, all over the place, as don't look well, partikler in a stout party; and I'm sure one fieldmale as we see, as 'adn't nothink on but pink silk a-fittin' tight all over, were full my figger, if not a little over; and 'owever she could bear the

squeezin' in of 'er waist I can't think, for she looked like one of them sand-glasses, as they did used to tell the 'our by afore time were inwented, as you can see by the clock, if it's right.

So let them as likes to see their feller-creeturs dancin' about denuded, like them Zulus as I've seen the fottygrafts on, go to them theayters; but for my part I likes to see 'em act natur, tho' not too much on it at a time, nor yet all them dreadful sufferin's, as reglar 'arrers you up like a toad in a plowed field, as is wot I don't care about.

Miss Pilkinton she's always a-sayin' as there ain't nothink like the Harmy and Navy Stores, but she always was one to run arter the sojers, and in course we all knows there must be them stores for both sojers and sailors too, as is everythink from boots and shoes to gunpowder and pig-tail, with rum and lime-juice, and I 'ave 'eard say as you may pick things up cheap at one of them sales where they sells off the old milingtary stores, as is mostly old iron and ropes ends, as is no doubt useful things in their way, like old Mr. Blower, as bought a little cannon to put by 'is flag-staff, as he set up on the lawn afore 'is 'ouse, as looked on the Tems near Battersea, as busted to splinters the day as Queen Wictorier were crowned, as he fired off and blowed 'isself into the pig-sty, and broke every bit of glass in 'is own 'ouse, and both sides of 'im,

and knocked Mrs. Purly, as were stone-deaf, over into the mud, as she were a-'angin' out, and thought it were the Tower guns, and the bells a-ringin', when the crown were put on the Queen's 'ead, and all them nobility give 'er a royal salute, as I've see a lovely picter on, so don't want to buy no miling-tary stores, as ain't much better than marine stores, as I remembers well a shop with a black doll 'ung out by the 'air of 'er 'ead, for a sign, and the words rote up in large letters for fear as they should be receivers of stolin goods, as some was; not but wot it were a punishment to buy a sojer's left-off uniform, and so I should think, partikler if you was forced to wear it. Not as I'm one to speak agin sojers, thro' my own boy bein' one, tho' I did break my 'eart when he 'listed, as was thro' words with 'is father, and I must say as I thought as Brown were 'ard on the boy, as was only seventeen, and six feet in 'is socks, and a chest that wide as he did used to bust out 'is shirt-front, and I will say as sweet a temper as a lamb, and no great arm if he did like larfin' and charfin' with the gals, as was their faults, as was always a-encouragin' of 'im. But that's all over now, and he never did nothink disonerable, for I always told 'im from a boy as there was only one way thro' life, and that's the straight one, and that's 'ow it were as he rose that rapid in the service; but little did I think as ever I should see a

son of mine carryin' arms, but made me say as I would go to the review in 'Igh Park, as was a thing as Brown never cared about, but both our gals was mad after, and it was through our Mary Ann as I went; not but wot I certingly did say as I should like to see it. I did 'ope as Brown might 'ave went to, for he is fond of Mary Ann, and takes to 'er boy, tho' he 'aven't never cottoned to the father. Not as ever I asked Brown to go, cos that would 'ave put 'im out—he was so sore about Joe 'listin', and certingly it were provokin', for he'd got a good openin' in the engineerin' line, as would 'ave been a little fortin by this time; but you can't put old 'eads on young soldiers, as the sayin' is.

But as I'd said I'd go to that review, I 'ad to break it gentle to Brown arter supper, so when he'd got 'is paper and pipe, I says, "I'm a-goin' to a review; tho'," I says, "wotever is the use of all them sojers I should like to know, except for the look of the thing, as certingly is imposin', tho' red ain't a colour as suits me."

So Brown he says, "You don't know nothin' about it, 'owever should you."

I says, "Don't I? Why," I says, "my dear mother washed two rigiments, as was quartered near 'Ounslow, leastways the officers, as was sent to the West Indies, and never got the money, thro' bein' killed in the Peninsular, as left widows and

orphins, and was a reproach to their country ever after, as always made my dear mother 'ate that Bonyparty, as caused it all, a willan, as 'angin' was too good for, as I've told the French over and over again, as would 'ave led to words, except for their not understandin', as don't seem to have their comprehenshuns much about them."

"Well, then," says Brown, "whyever do you go to see them sojers?"

I says, "Do you think, Mr. Brown, as I'm a-goin' to allow a dorter of mine, tho' married, to go to sich a sight alone, where a mother is a purtection? Not as I espects no enjoymint; and as to 'er a-luggin' that boy all the way, it's madness, down right, that it is."

"Why," says Brown, "she lives close by, so it ain't nothin' for 'er, but as to your a-goin' it's foolishness."

"Well," I says, "I never did see sich a man as you are; when I don't know things, full of your redicule at my ignorance, and when I wants to see 'em with my own eyes, you're always the one to 'old me back. But," I says, "go I do the first thing, thro' 'avin' promised Mary Ann as I'd be there early, as I'm to meet 'er at the Marble Arch, as the Edgeware Road is a long distance." So I started with Brown, as see me into the Whitechapel Road, where the busses runs reglar, and ketched the fust, as rattled that dreadful thro' bein' empty, as seemed to jar my head to death.

Not as I 'eld with that conductor's remarks, as 'ollered to the coachman when he 'elped in a party in widder's weeds, as was certingly lusty.

"Go on, Joe, here's more ballast," as is insults to a lady, as she certingly was, tho' she'd that 'urried as I thought she never would git 'er breath agin; and was obliged for to take 'er drops, as was in a little basket, as she said went agin 'er, tho' a great sufferer aperintly. As told me she was a-goin' to 'er daughter, as wouldn't be pacified till she got there, tho' she says, "It's as much as my life's worth, thro' 'avin' done as I seldom or never does put my feet in 'ot water, with James' powders," a medicin as I don't 'old with, as acts on the skin.

So we was talkin' friendly, thro' 'er bein' one as was esperienced, and like my own constitution, and known sorrers in havin' buried 'er good gentleman, as was in the white lead line, a thing as is deleterious, and will lurk in the constitushun, and brought on fits, thro' which he was took suddin. Not as he was one for to regret, for she told me as 'is 'abits was bad, and temper wiolent, and she says to me, "Forgive and forget, tho'," she says, "I shall carry that man's marks to my grave," and was that pleasint company as I was sorry when she got out in 'Olborn, thro' 'er dorter a-livin' in Bloomsbury.

I says, "Conductor," I says, a-hittin' 'im with

my umbrella, "put me down at the Marble Arch, as is somewhere beyond Charin' Cross."

So he says, "My eye, what a smell of sperrits; wotever 'ave you got in your redicule?"

"Why," I says, "it's only drops agin the spavins, as I do believe as the cork must 'ave been and come out."

"Ah!" he says, "no doubt you 'ave 'ad the cork out pretty often."

I didn't tell 'im as he weren't no gentleman, as were quite aperient at a glance with 'arf a eye; for both of 'is was blacked. So I says, "Never you mind my drops, but put me down at the Marble Arch."

He says, "You'll 'ave to change at the Circus, cos I don't go no further."

I says, "Put me in the right bus, that's all, for I am full late;" and so I was, and when I got up to near the Park the crowds was a reglar sea of 'uman 'eads, and I 'ad to get out afore we could get near the Marble Arch; and as to seein' Mary Ann or Jane, they was like a needle in a bottle of 'ay, for the crowd as was reglar jammed, with your feet trod to a jelly, and nothink to see arter all but the firin' of guns and the smoke in the air, and as to them genrals and sich like, they was no more wisible than the clipse of the sun as I once got up afore daybreak to look at, and then were told as it could only be seen miles out at sea, off the Land's

End in a open boat, as must be 'ighly dangerous, and you don't ketch me a-runnin' of none of them risks, tho' a party in the bus, as were in the seafarin' perswasion, did tell me as if I were upset out of a boat as I should float like blubber, as I considers were a rude speech to a lady, for tho' a full figger I ain't no porpuss, nor yet werry like a wail, as another party in that bus as I were a-gettin' into when that sailor feller made them remarks about blubber, as I always thought meant a-sheddin' of tears, as I must say I did when poor Mrs. Giddins were a-tellin' me 'ow 'er sister as were Mrs. Pelto, thro' different fathers, 'ad been sold up and reglar ruined thro' them Corporation Stores a-settin' up close agin 'er. Not as I should 'ave thought as it would 'ave been worth any Corporation Stores to 'ave run into bull's-eyes, cos arter she'd been and failed in a good many things, she took and sunk 'er little all in toffee. Not as I quite fancied that woman, tho' preaps to be pitied, arter all, tho' she did be'ave reglar artful over them silver things as I lent 'er, and were thought that 'onest as butter wouldn't melt in 'er mouth, as the sayin' is, and only found out by 'axident, thro' me a-seein' of my own silver sugar-tongs, as I'd been and stuck to thro' fire and water, as I'd lent 'er, in a winder in Racklif 'ighway, as I were a-passin' by, and knowed 'em in a instant, thro' bein' a old-fashion pattern as belonged to my grandmother's

mother, as kep a brush and ile shop in Chandos Street, and remembered the Gordin Riots like yesterday, and see King George go to St. Paul's over and over agin arter his madness, as he was subject to, and as to 'er mother agin, as were of the Scotch 'perswasion, from Dundee, she remembered 'ow Prince Charlie nearly got his rights agin, the same year as she walked to London.

Well, as I were a-sayin', I looks in at that shop-winder, and I says, "If my grandmother's sugar-tongs is above ground that's them." So I goes in and asks the party as kep' the shop if she'd take five and six for 'em, tho' they was marked seven shillings. That party were a fieldmale as looked for all the world like a man in pettycoats, with a gruff woice, as said, "No! shan't take a penny less, and they're wuth it."

I says, "Let me look at 'em."

She say, "No, I shan't 'ave you mawlin' the things about, as looks like a shoplifter yourself."

I didn't let myself down for to anser sich impydence, but out I walks, and put on my glasses, as I've been and took a 'igher number to thread my needle with at night. When I come to look at them sugar-tongs even thro' the winder, I could swear to 'em. I goes on a little bit furder, come smack up agin the perlice station, and in I walks and tells the inspector, as says, "If you're sure as

they belongs to you, why, in course they must give 'em up, but 'ow did you come to lose 'em?"

So I says, "I will not deceive you. I lent 'em to Mrs. Pelto, thro' 'er bein' short in 'er rent, as is 'er 'abits, and kep' a fancy shop close agin where the railway runs into the back of the 'Black Pig', close agin Lime'ouse Church. She kep' that fancy shop a good bit, and were that respected all round, thro' the minister of Bethesder, as she'd sat under for years, a supportin' of 'er, and comin' constant a-takin' of a cup of tea with 'er, at least once a week, as some thought as would end in 'im a-leadin' of 'er to the halter, thro' bein' in general considered to 'ave a bit of money in the Funds. But one day she come in all of a fluster and told me as she were that bad off as she'd 'ave the brokers in the place within' four-and-twenty 'ours, if she didn't pay the Queen's Taxes, as she thought were werry 'ard in Queen Wictorier for to be so pressin' about, as bein' a widder 'erself she might 'ave a 'art as can feel for another. I says, 'And so she 'ave, no doubt, as I was a-dreamin' about 'er myself only last night, but, bless you, she don't know nothink about 'ow the taxes is got in, and would rather die if it wasn't for Parlymint afore she'd let any one's bed be took from under 'em.' Well, I lent that woman my sugar-tongs and four tea-spoons, and a old-fashioned brooch, as 'ad 'ad 'air in it, as some said was the

Prince Regent's, but don't fancy it were myself, thro' 'im always wearin' a wig, as I see 'im in myself as King, when quite a gal at Brighton. Well, the werry next mornin' who should come in as pale as death but Mrs. Pelto, all of a twitter, a-sayin' as 'er place had been broke opin while at chapel, and everythink took as was wuth a fardin'. I says, 'My things was wuth a deal more than a fardin'.' She took on dreadful, sayin' what would people think of 'er. I says, 'Let em think wot they likes, you didn't break yourself open.' She kep' on a frettin', and wouldn't take no comfort, not even a thimbleful of carraway. So I says, 'Well, it might be wuss;' and when they made up a collection for 'er at the chapel I wouldn't take five shillins as the minister wanted me to for my silver." So the inspector, as was werry impatient, says, "Can you swear to them tongs."

I says, "I can." Then he says, "I'll send one of the force with you to the shop."

I says, "I don't want no force used." He says, "You wont get 'em without."

Well, we goes over to that shop, and if a man as was there didn't give up them tongs like a bird, without a murmur, as the sayin' is, tho' he said as it were 'ard on 'im, as 'is mother 'ad took 'em in the way of busyness. I was sorry for that man, and give 'im 'arf-a-crown for to make up 'is loss as

soon as the perlice were gone. Well, as I thought Mrs. Pelto would like to know, and as I 'adn't seen nothink of 'er for some weeks, as 'ad give up 'er shop and were a-livin' in a fust floor front, I thought I'd go and tell 'er as I'd got 'em. So that werry next arternoon I went to see 'er, and takes them sugar-tongs, and arter a bit I takes 'em out of my pocket, and says, "Where do you think I found 'em." She give sich a scream, and says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, it wasn't me, but that Billers, as serves me right, as that wile creatur should 'ave been and rounded on me, but," she says, "I only did it to save my boy." I didn't say nothink, but let 'er run on, and if she didn't let out as she 'adn't never been robbed at all, but 'ad got all the story up, with the 'elp of a serious party as kep' a chanderly shop in the name of Billers, as 'er grandson 'ad been shop-boy to, and 'ad been a-fingerin' the till, and she'd been drove distracted to make the money to square that Billers, and get the boy off to sea. I says, "Is the boy gone." "Yes," she says, "this three months." I says, "And 'ave you give all your property over to this 'ere pious party. "Yes," she says, "and more than that, he's got best part of all the money as was raised for me in the chapel, and that poor boy 'ave gone off without a second rag to 'is back, as I don't believe ever put 'is 'and in the till at all, tho' old Billers swore he'd

been and put marked money there, jest to ketch 'im; and the boy swore as the marked money were give 'im for 'is wages by Billers 'isself, as 'is a black 'arted willin. I says that I knows 'im to be thro' a-rememberin' 'is fust wife, as 'ad a bit of money, and were found drowned at Margit, jest under the cliffs, as they said drowned 'erself, as is wot I don't believe, for she 'adn't fell off them cliffs, cos there wasn't a bruise about 'er; and as to Billers 'is story were a werry lame one, as said as they went for a walk along the sands, and that she turned faint and set down on the rocks, and he went on for to get a pony carridge, or somethink for 'er, and when he come back the tide 'ad come in and washed 'er away, as she wasn't wisible to the naked eye nowheres, till found drownded the follerin' mornin', with 'eavy stones on 'er clothes to keep 'er down, as made a great noise all about where he lived then, as were Little Chelsea, in the marine store line, with a black doll 'angin' out at the door, and then took and cut 'is lucky, as the sayin' is, and I never espected as he'd turn up agin like this, as is up to 'is old games agin, no doubt; so I says, "You just let me see 'im, that's all."

"Oh!" she says, "he's sure to look in, this werry afternoon, for he's advanced me money, as I pays 'im back by instalments."

I says, "All right; and now you keep quiet, cos

tho' in course you've acted very rong, yet he's a bad egg for to 'ave give in to sich ways, and put you up to 'em."

She didn't say nothink, but kep' a-sobbin' a good deal till she'd 'ad a cup of tea, as seemed for to calm 'er down like, as it will do any one with their nerves all shook to fiddle-strings, as the sayin' is; cos as I'd been and told 'er, tho' not a 'angin' matter, it might be two year in Ollerway, for wilful and corrupted purgerin' of 'erself.

We was jest finishin' of our second cup, when a tap came at the door, as she give me a nod, to say it were Billers. I'd got my back to 'im when he come in, and says, "Oh! company. I'm glad to see that, cos you must be flush of money." I got up werry slow, and takin' good care not to turn my face, moves my chair, so as to get between 'im and the door, as I put my back agin.

Mrs. Pelto, she says, "Oh! Mr. Billers, I'm as poor as ever, if not poorer."

"Ah!" he says, "the old story, but it won't do; you shall 'ear from me." And he turns round sharp to walk out of the room, and sees me a-standin' with my back to the door.

"Wot are you a-stoppin' me for," he says, "my good woman?" with a scowl. "Let me go out."

I says, "I'll let you go when I've done with you, Mr. Billers."

He give sich a start, and turned white as hashes, and then, a-tryin' to smile, says, "Wot—my dear old friend, Mrs. Brown!"

I says, "I'm gettin' old, and shall perhaps cost you dear, Mr. Billers; but I aint no friend of yours, and never was."

"Ah!" he says, "why not? You loved my lost treasure, as the cruel waves swallered up; not as I wishes 'er back."

I says, "I dare say not; cos if she was to come back she could tell tales." I says, "I was 'er friend, as come to see me and my 'usban the night afore she went down to Margit, and saw 'er there just afore she died—leastways, come to a untimely end."

He says, "It's false; it was accident."

I says, "That will never be known the truth about this side the grave; but," I says, "I've wanted to see you, and 'ave sent you word to come, and you promised as you would, but never did."

"Oh!" he says, "it was so painful to my feelin's."

"Ah!" I says, "well, we won't waste no words over that; but, as I have met you, I'll just tell you that your wife gave me a lot of papers to take care on."

He says, "Have you got 'em?"

I says, "They're safe."

He says, "Then you'll please to 'and them over to me."

I says, "I've got a 'usban as I never acts without consultin'; so you'd better come and ask 'im about 'em."

He says, "Has he read them papers?"

I says, "My 'usban bein' a gentleman, tho' a workin' man, it aint likely as he'd break open a letter."

"Then," he says, "it's addressed to me."

"No," I says, "it aint, but you come and see it. Only don't come at meal times, cos remember, I don't inwite you as a friend; I never was no friend of yours, nor never will be," and with them words, I opens the door, and out of the room he sneaks.

I didn't say no more to Mrs. Pelto, beyond a-tellin' 'er not to give that feller any more money; and 'ome I went and told Brown, as says, "All right, I'll see 'im;" and so he did, for that Billers come the follerin' evenin', and Brown made 'im open that letter in 'is presence, as was that poor woman's dyin' wishes, as Brown said was to be acted up to. Billers kicked a good deal, but 'ad to give in, thro' 'er 'avin' wrote in that letter, as 'ad a sealed antelope inside it, "The enclosed to be give to my 'usban, on condition he agrees to all I 'ave said; if not, give it to Mr. Floxman the lawyer."

So Brown says to Billers, "You meet me tomorrer at Mr. Floxman's office, as is close agin Lincoln's Inn Fields, and if you signs and seals every-

think according to your wife's wishes you'll 'ave this letter, if not, it's give to the lawyer."

We never knowed wot it was, for Billers he met Brown at the lawyer's, and reglar caved in, as the sayin' is, so got 'is letter, but not afore as he'd wrote a letter to Mrs. Pelto, a-sayin' as 'er boy were quite innercent, and givin' 'er back every penny as she'd ever paid 'im.

It went agin Brown for to let 'im off like that, as he said were a-compoundin' a felerny.

I says, "Oh! bother compounds, so as we've got the poor woman out of 'is power, and made 'im do as 'is wife wished 'im; but," I says, "he were only Merrykin arter all, tho' as I says, "There is good in Merrykins, else I'm sure they'd be all swallered up for their wickedness; and, as to religion, with many it's only a trade for the ministers to live well on, and parties a-belongin' to a church, cos it's fashionable; so they 'as 'em all sorts and prices accordin' to taste. Certingly, as Brown often says, with a sneer, if we want a model country for morils of all sorts, we did ought to go to Merryker, and he's a man as is always fair to every one, and werry often checks me in runnin' down Merryker, cos he knows I 'ates it, quite as bad as Merryker 'ates us, as they don't 'esitate to up and tell you when they aint got anythink to get by carneyin', and a-pretendin' as they love Old England, as is all lies and ippocrisy as I can't abear.

pushed about as if you was lumber, and then to be insulted in open court afore the jury, and under the werry nose of the Judge, and 'im a-settin' there like a statute drored up, as didn't seem to take no notice of wot were a-goin' on, and a whipper-snapper chap in a wig as were too small for 'im, and couldn't 'ave wanted, for I never see a finer 'ead of 'air, with whiskers and mustachers to match, but with all the cheek as ever I did 'ear, a-tellin' of me to lift up my wail and let the jury see my face.

So I says, "I aint ashamed to look anyone in the face, not even judge nor jury either;" not as ever I did face one afore, tho' I've 'eard young Challens, as lodged along with me, and did used to keep frightful late 'ours, as he attended a Judge and Jury of a night three times a week in Bow Street, as was that amusin' with their jokes; and I remembers a-thinkin' at the time that they must 'ave 'ard work to keep it up so late at night; but as to jokin' over tryin' parties for their lives, I don't 'old with it.

But there weren't no jokin' with that judge and jury, as I was afore; and never was so badgered in my life, the judge askin' me if I knowed the nature of the oath. So I says, "'Ow should I, afore I 'ears it?" He says, "Wot orful ignorance, at your time of life!" as put me out, for tho' not ashamed

of my hage, I don't like to 'ave it throwed in my teeth. So I says to 'im, I says, "Well, if you come to time of life, when I dies of old age, you'll quake for fear."

So he says, "It's of no use goin' on with the hexamination of this witness; she's that stoopid as to be useless."

I says, "I wish as you'd 'ave found that out afore, and not 'ave kep' me 'ere all this time; cos I was jest as stoopid when I fust come as I am now."

A party 'ollers out—"Silence!" and then the judge, as I see'd were put out, he give that Mrs. Weldin three months, as made 'er yell agin, and swear as she'd serve me out; and so she would that day as I met 'er, for she gave me a wiolent shove, and would 'ave tore my clothes off my back, only 'er boys 'eld 'er back, and jest then a bobby come a-glidin' round the corner, so she took and lewanted, as the sayin' is.

But, talkin' of Stores, it did make me stare to 'ear about the things as is sent out for the sojers to the Cape; as I dare say they never gets, any more than my own brother did a box as was sent 'im to that there Crimeer War, as my dear mother slaved 'er 'art out to get ready, as was everythink as he could want, and never got a smell on it; as is my opinion them Turks got 'old on, and bagged the

lot. And I do think as Bacinsfield is right, they did ought to be took and turned out of Urope, as is a beastly lot as ever I see, and tho' the Rooshins aint no better, they aint Turks. But for my part, as to pollytics I'm reglar sick on, and were that pleased when Brown he brought 'ome the paper as 'ad all about them Corporation Stores, and says to me, "Here's a meetin' been over them Stores, as you're got your 'ead so full on."

I says, "I'm sure I aint got my 'ead full of nothink but wot did ought to be there, as is constant thoughts 'ow to best keep a 'ouse over my 'ead, as is a constant struggle, tho' you may not be drove for money up to your grave's end, as the sayin' is; as I'm thankful to look back and think of the time when I 'ad to look twice at a shillin' afore I changed it, as can now afford to 'elp them as is bitin' short, as the sayin' is; cos I'm sure it's a blessin' to 'ave knowed poverty, if it gives you a feelin' 'art, tho' it 'ave made some reglar skinflints afore now. Tho' as I were a-sayin' to Mrs. Toffley, I can't make out any one as 'ave been poor theirselves bein' 'ard on them as is poor, with preaps only the parish to fall back on, as is cold comfort, partikler for them as 'ave lived comfortable, and 'ad a pretty busyness in the fancy line, afore Stores was ever thought on, tho' Corporations was, for I remembers well the Corporation pew in Old Kingston

Church, when quite a child, as was where them old anshent kings did used to be crowned, settin' on a cold stone, as is to be seen to this werry day, with a iron rail round it, jest thro' the town, and it's to be 'oped as they didn't 'ave to set there as long as Queen Wictorier when crowned, as 'ad one of them stones under 'er Corynashun Chair, as she 'ad brought from Scotland, as took from five in the mornin' till quite afternoon—leastways, that's the time as Lady Wittles were in the Abbey; but, in course, kings and queens 'as their trials, like King Charles with 'is 'ead off at Whiteall, or that King Louie of France, as were gullinteened, as good a man as ever stepped, tho' too easy goin' for this world, as is a warnin' as wot we may all come to, cos life in general aint all beer and skittles, not even to kings and queens.

But, as I were a-sayin', that Corporation did used to come in State to Kingston Church, as were all tradespeople, but didn't go a-cuttin' one another's throats, as is bad work even for Zulus; and I must say as I do not like this ere war, and there's Mrs. Milbun's nephew as is out there, he rites about takin' of Zululand, as he says is to be ours, and the sooner we take it the better; "but," I says, "that can't be right, cos Zulus didn't make theirselves, and it's their 'ome, as there's no place like it, be it ever so 'umble, as the sayin' is, and to

me it's werry like covetin' other people's goods, to go and collar their lands, cos I suppose a Zulu is your naybor, partikler when you go to 'is country and tries to collar it, as in course he ain't a-goin' to give up quietly, and as to our goin' there to civilise 'im, I only 'opes he won't get 'old of none of our noosepapers along with our tracks, and read about our doin's in the way of murders and swindles, cos he would 'ave the larf agin us, with our piety and morals. I'm glad tho' for all that to think as there's so many as is true Inglish to the backbone, and don't want to see savidges bullied, as I'm sure is the last of Queen Wictorier's thoughts, bless 'er royal 'art, and that's why she's been and sent that Card'nal Wolsey, as is I suppose 'arf brother, or somethink to Card'nal Mannin', preaps thro' the mother's side, for to set things rite; not that he'll agree with that there Bishop Colenser, as is a wonderful 'and at ready reckonin', I've 'eard say, and is a-goin' to rite a new Bible for them Kaffirs, leastways I've 'eard say as there's a lot on 'em of all religions 'ard at it down in Westminster, what they calls a-revisin' the Scripters, so as to make 'em that clear as parties won't be a-quarrellin' over religion, and every one can believe wot they like, as will no doubt be made to suit Zulus and Kaffirs too, and let in Turks and Jews, and all manner; cos wot's the odds as long as you're 'appy,

as would all agree to 'ave Queen Wictorier the 'ead of the Church; tho' there wasn't no occasion for the temper as Mrs. O'Grady showed, as is the Irish perswasion, when the Bible-woman give 'er a Testamen, as she took and shied smack at 'er 'ead, and burnt the tracks afore 'er face as she left, a-stuffin' 'em under the kittle, as certingly was the only way they was of use to that Mrs. O'Grady, as there aint a letter in the book as she could spell, for love or money, and yet as kind a 'art as ever stepped, and never rong a farthin' in 'er milk score. But talkin' of scores reminds me as these ere Stores are for all the world like markets, as did used to be when my grandmother was a gal, as was married the year of the riots, and were nearly shot in the street a-goin' to market with 'er money in 'er 'and, and never 'ad no credit beyond the milk, as run for a week and chalked up behind the door, but rubbed off every Monday, the same as many would 'ave a score at the public-'ouse as were chalked up behind the door, but never run above a week.

There's one thing agin Stores besides not 'avin' ready money, and that is the time as it takes up a-goin' there, as is all werry well for them as keeps their carridges, and got nothink to do of a afternoon but drive to the Stores, with a footman to bring the things away, but parties as

'ave got their 'ands a deal fuller than their pockets, can't afford the time; and so it is with many others, as it's a great conwenience, the butcher a-callin' for orders, not but wot I like to go and see my jintes cut for myself, and as to cheap meat, not for me, tho' it may be very good, but it don't look so; not as I'm dainty, but I do say as in wittles pleasin' the eye is 'arf the battle, both raw and cooked, and it's as much as ever I can do to get to the butcher's early enuf, for once get your bonnet on and the mornin's gone, with everythink run behind at 'ome. I do think as the days did ought to be longer and the weeks too for that matter, for it seems to me to be always Monday mornin' comin' round, and the lots of things as I thinks I'm a-goin' to do in the course of the week, as I never gets 'arf thro' is astonishin', partikler with work on 'and, and as to makin' a dress at 'ome, it's a thing as I never will do any more in this world, partikler with Miss Pilkinton's help, for the things she makes is a old-fashioned cut and quite sure never to set well, neither behind nor before; and as to turnin' things, as a rule it don't anser, for I never did see sich a figger as Old Sinful went out on Easter Sunday in 'is wife's life time, in a pair of unmentionables, as I'm sure 'er and 'is dorter 'ad been and turned for 'im, as looked for all the world as if he'd been and put 'em on hind part before; and in course if Miss

Pilkinton likes to be friends there let 'er, but I don't want 'er to be a-goin' over there and a-settin' a-jawin' a 'orse's 'ind leg off, as the sayin' is, all the arternoon, and then come to me starvin' for 'er tea, as she's welcome to in course; but I don't want to know nothink about Old Sinful, nor yet 'is grand-dorter neither, as may 'ave as many children as she likes, tho' not likely, as will never see forty no more in this world; tho', as I says to Brown, "You didn't 'ave no occasion to lose your temper, and use sich langwidge over parties' ages."

I'm sure I'm quite ready to 'ear all about this meetin' over the Corporation Stores; and as to Brown a-sayin' as it's no use a-readin' to me about nothink, as I'm off like a church in a instant, why, it's black falsehoods, for I'm sure I took in every word, and considers a deal on it downright rubbish. As to sayin' as chemists don't make no money over wot they sell, I do not believe it, as there must be profit on arf-a-crown for a pot of cold cream, the same as a box of tooth-powder, and lots of things as is made up and never arf used; and I'm sure it's a good thing as the medsins as is made up should be arf throwed away, as there'd be as many deaths in families as if there was a medsin-chest in the 'ouse, as 'ave proved the death of thousins; and when Mrs. Limley were a-tellin' me as all these 'ere St. Katharin's nusses

as is to go out to our harmy is each to 'ave a medsin-chest to 'erself, "Then," I says, "no enemy in this world won't cut up our sojers so quick as the doses as them fancy nusses will give 'em, as may be werry well for ornyment, and never make up nothink myself but preaps a 'air-wash, as I'm thinkin' of sendin' a bottle on to the Prince of Wales, bless 'is royal bald 'ead! as I'm sure he would find give 'im quite a thatch in no time, as I can prove brought up Jane Barnes' back 'air wonderful; and so it would Miss Pilkinton's, if she'd 'ave listened to me, and not gone off on 'er own 'ook and bought blisterin' 'intment, as she took and rubbed in at the roots, night and mornin', and 'ad all 'er 'ead up in blisters full of water in three days, as no doubt washed up the rest of 'er 'air by the roots, and might 'ave turned to airysipilis, so in course couldn't never be espected to grow agin; and I'm sure if I 'ad my time to come over agin, I'd never take to fronts, as is that 'ot to the 'ead, and constant espense; and there's Mrs. Padwick, with 'er own 'air like a door-mat all over 'er 'ead, tho' in course gone grey, as is only to be espected at sixty-three as is gettin' on, but, like me, would scorn to dye as long as she lives, as is sailin' under false colours as the sayin' is, and not like natur, after all, let alone the trouble, as I knowed a party as did used to roll 'er 'ead up in cabbage-leaves, and

then set with it inside the oven door, as brought on frightful 'eadaches, and one day werry nigh cooked 'er own goose, as the sayin' is, thro' the oven bein 'otter nor wot she espected, and took and ketched away 'er breath the moment as she put 'er 'ead inside it; and if it 'adn't been as she pulled the kittle of bilin' water all over 'er, as were a-standin' on the 'ob, as woke 'er up, she'd 'ave 'obbed and nobbed it too, as the sayin' is; the same as Mrs. Weldin, as 'ad a small gas ironin' stove, as were a great conwenience, no doubt, as you could stand on a chair, with a 'lastic pipe a-connectin' it with the main or anywheres, and never thought as 'er mother-in-law would come in a-staggerin' thro' the 'eat, and flop 'erself down on it, as wasn't turned on full, or she'd 'ave been something more than scorched, tho' she did get off with a 'ole in 'er gown as big as a tea-tray, with everythink burnt thro' to 'er werry skin, as was only 'er weight as saved 'er, thro' estinguishin' of nearly all them jets, jest the same as bein' rolled in a rug, or 'avin' a carpet throwed over you, as will save you in flames. Not as Mrs. Bethel need 'ave took and smothered me with that beastly door-mat all over my 'ead, as she'd got in 'er 'and, a-goin' to shake it out at the back door, a-thinkin' as I'd esploded, as 'ad only jest struck a lucifer for to see where the gas were escapin' from

under the stairs, as all flared up like the fat in the fire. But that's the wust of 'avin' them chairwomin in the 'ouse, as 'ad turned the tap 'erself, for they'll always be up to some mischief, or else a pilferin', not but I were spilte with Mrs. Challin, as were like a sister in everythink but drink, as she never could keep clear on, not even in the mornin', as would 'ave 'er 'arf-a-quartern in 'er beer, tho' only 'er nonnin's, as stuck to 'er witals, poor thing; as were why the doctor gave no 'opes from the fust, tho' I'm sure she'd everythink to live for, and a 'appy old age, and only herrysypilis in the face, with a nevvy as were a sailor, as she'd been a mother to from the month, as come from sea, and purwided a comfortable 'ome for 'er thro' bein' that well to do, 'avin' made money thro' goin' into a tea garden out in China; not like Mr. Cleaver, the butcher, as only allowed 'is own mother and sister 'arf-a-crown a quarter, and espected that to keep 'er out of the 'ouse, poor soul, and all 'is pride, cos he didn't like 'er to speak to 'im in the workus dress a-comin' out of church of a Sunday, as isn't wot I calls religion, not but wot I've knowed chapel-goers as was quite as 'orty, for there was old Mrs. 'Unter, as I remembers a-dyin', when quite a gal, as belonged to Rollin 'Ill, over the water somewheres, as did used to preach about 'is wife 'avin' of a chest of drawers on 'er 'ead, as was a gentleman born, tho' he did

come down to a chapel, and only out of spite agin the Church, thro' not bein' made a Bishop, leastways that's wot parties said. Why, that old woman was that proud, as she'd rather go without 'er tea than stoop to take in the milk, when the gal was upstairs a-cleanin' of 'erself, as I should consider sinful myself, as 'ave fetched my own supper beer scores of times; and as to Brown, why, I've knowed 'im fetch the dinner from the oven every Sunday of 'is life for weeks in 'is shirt sleeves, and glory in it, thro' bein' one of them fine open characters as wasn't never one to wish to be mistook for a gentleman, tho' not ashamed of his poverty neither, for not one on us, even the children, never cared for baked wittles, as we give it up when coals wasn't no longer that object to us, and I do say as them as wants to shet up the bakers of a Sunday is downright wicked, and wuss than that, them as fines a baker for givin' out a jinte arter two o'clock, as aint been fetched in time, did ought to be put on bread-and-water for a week. Ah! I only wish them as makes the laws for the poor knowed wot it was to 'ave short commons and odds and ends all the week, and then see wot they'd say to a bit of baked pork of a Sunday, with taters and a puddin' under it, for tho' rich it's relishin' as a poor man enjoys more a deal than preaps a Lord Mare does 'is Turkey soup and wenison, as he

aint often got no appetite for, tho', preaps, gin and bitters all the mornin' constant, for to try and put a hedge on to it; as aint no use, and reglar wears out the coats of the stomich in time, the same as devilled biskets and a red 'errin' to prowoke thust, as dies that bloatered with gout, and doublin' up their jintes, with all the doctors round their beds, a-doin' them no good for all their pains. As I am sure Alderman Wittles were a downright gold mine to doctors, a-droppin' of 'is sovrins and shillin's done up in a bit of paper in their 'ands, and no 'ope from the fust, for I 'eard two on em a-talkin' myself thro' bein' agin the door, as one said "a fortnight," and the other "three weeks," as was both wrong, for he lived a month, as nothink solid never passed his lips but champain and soda water and milk, poor feller, as 'ad 'ad a good innin's, as he said 'isself, a kind 'art, and told me as he were thankful, when I was a-settin' up with 'im, for he said as he'd wheeled a barrow for 'is mother when a boy, with clean clothes, a-goin' 'ome of a Saturday, and never espected to ride in 'is carriage, and 'adn't no pride, tho' he did like the good things of this life; and quite right too, only wot I can't bear is the 'umbug of parties as sets a-sippin' all the evenin' at their wines and sperrits arter a-swallerin' of their rich licks, and then goes and makes laws in Parlymint for to stop a man 'avin' of a pint of beer or a drop of grog of

a Sunday; as is the werry time as he should be able to enjoy 'isself; and as to crimes bein' brought on by drink, no doubt they are with them as is given to wice; but, mussy on us, don't go and find fault with the poor over their wices, but jest look wot the rich does for to amuse themselves, and if you wants to stop wicked ways of a Sunday, you'd better take and lock everybody up from Saturday night to Monday mornin'; and I'm sure you'd 'ave to stop Sundays and Bank 'Oliday, and everythink else like that, if keepin' parties at 'ome is the way to put a end to wice and wickedness, as do certingly seem wuss than ever, and when I reads them Diworce Courts, I says to Brown, as they did ought to change that there Marriage Service, and they didn't ought to say "for better for worse," "till death us do part," but it did ought to be "from bad to wuss, till diworce us do part," for I'm sure now-a-days marriage means only for as long as parties likes one another, as don't consider as they're married for life, and in my opinion them as thinks nothink about puttin' their wives and 'usbins away, wouldn't mind whether it was done by pison or anythink else, so as they got rid on 'em. I'm a old-fashioned party, no doubt, but I sees wot'll come of them diworces pretty soon, as Brown says, "is a reglar moral riverlution," but I considers as they're downright unmoral myself; the same as

QueenWictorier, as won't set down in 'er own drorin' room with sich parties, and 'ave 'eard of a diworced party as 'ad got all 'er things ready for to be persented to the Queen, but didn't go thro' 'avin 'got the straight tip as she'd 'ave the door shet in 'er face.

But as to that there meetin', as Brown were full on, to put down them Stores, there was a deal of rubbish talked, and why ever civil servints shouldn't set up a Store I can't think, as it's a good thing to incourage them in savin' ways, and not spend every fardin on their backs, the same as Liza Giddins, as would go out of a Sunday dressed like any Countess, with a powdered footman behind, thro' bein' in a ready made 'ouse, and might 'ave come to me often of a Sunday thro' that 'ouse where she lived not a-providin' no dinner for the young womin of a Sunday, as in course throwed 'er on the wide world, not as she need 'ave gone to Greenwich Park by 'erself, and didn't ought to 'ave been took in by that party, tho' he were elderly, as she only met in the train, tho', in course, 'is Bible and 'im book throwed 'er off 'er guard, partikler takin' 'er to a place of worship, and to give 'er a engaged ring afore they parted, as was goin' too fast in my opinion, as I told 'er, and only proves as them register office marriages don't lay no 'old of people; besides, the moment I see 'is taller face I see ippercrit on it quite plain, and 'ad a sneaky woice, and talked

about wessels of grace, and then to turn out to be a married man, as is only to be espected if young womin will go a-loafin' and idlin' about of a Sunday arternoon, as can't be too cautious in this world, and only theirselves to thank.

As I were a-sayin' to Mrs. Speldin, as is a widder 'erself, nobody didn't never ought to marry parties as they picks up permiscous in the streets, tho' it might be a place of worship, cos look at that Wainwright, as were a Sabbath-school teacher 'isself, as shows 'ow pride comes to 'ave a fall, cos in course them as sets theirselves up to teach, means to say as they knows more than their feller-creeturs, as is all pride, and a-lovin' to take and dictate to others, as is the way too frequent with Miss Pilkinton; and as to 'er dressmakin', as I said afore, I don't think as she couldn't fit a 'og in armour, as the sayin' is, in my opinion, as will cut out two sides of a back the same, and pucker you up under the arm 'oles as is to make you look all a one side, with a deep gore under your arm, as were all werry well for Maria Frimley, as were as crooked as a ram's 'orn, with 'er 'ip growed out, but a lovely 'ead of 'air as growed in curls right down below 'er waist, but didn't look well in book muslin and blue kid boots with 'igh 'eels, as ketched in the curb stone in crossin' the street, and as near as a toucher under the 'osses feet, as were a omblibus, as 'ad drored up

in one of them mud puddin's close agin the kennel, as the drain bein' open saved poor Maria's life, for she pitched into it 'ead fust, and the wheel only ketched 'er 'air, as it tore out by the roots, least-ways, a good part on it, so she wore it ever arter in a crop, as looked better, partikler with a Coburg cloth made up to 'er chin, as kep 'er 'ump under, and seemed to straighten 'er all the way down, as is more than ions ever did, as she wore from child-hood, and it's a pity as somethink couldn't be found for to sweeten 'er temper, as 'ad a tung like brim-stone, and would take out 'er two sisters 'airs by the 'andful, and kicked 'er grandmother when a-stoop-in' down to take up the hashes under the grate, with 'er clump foot, and sent the old lady 'ead fust agin the bars, as it's a mussy as there were not a fire a-burnin', or might 'ave ended fatal; not as the old lady was a worm to be trampled on without a turnin', for she gave Maria one for 'erself with the tongs, as she threw at 'er, as sent the poor cripple a-topplin' over, as it's a mussy I didn't go in at the door, a minit sooner or I might 'ave 'ad them tongs across my shins for my pains, for I'd gone to spend the day with Maria's aunt, as I'd knowed a many years, tho' always a Peter Grievous, and Frimley were a mute, with a constitutional cough, as standin' at doors drove on to 'is lungs, and no doubt witnessin' constant other sorrers

weighed on 'is sperrits, for he'd set and shed tears silent into 'is tea; not as he were of a serious turn, for he told me once as he didn't believe in God nor nothink, so I says, "Oh! indeed, some don't, as is all thro' bein' so clever, and 'avin' good edications, in course you've read so much about it." It was only jeers, cos I knowed he was a fool, and couldn't neither read nor rite. So he turned red over that, and I didn't say no more.

Mrs. Frimley she had a bit of property, and lived jest off 'Igh Street, Marrybone; so I went by the Undergrounded Railway, as is a great conwenience, tho' I can't say as ever I fancies and shan't never forget a-goin' by it when fust opened, as I 'ad my misgivin's over a-thinkin' as they must run into the drains or somethink unpleasant, but yet not likin' to be behind my hage I went, as it's a mussy as ever I got anywheres, and weren't down under the train a dozen times, for they kep on a-whiskerin' me by them stations that quick as I 'adn't time to get out, and 'ad the door slammed that wiolent, that if I'd 'ad my fingers in the way, must 'ave been reglar pulverised to lock jaws, as is a 'orful death, let alone bein' choked by the foul hair as you can't breathe for, partikler at Baker Street, as made me pretty nigh cough my 'art up, a-tryin' to go to Madam Tussor's, and brought on sich frightful spavins as I 'ad to go 'ome in a cab,

so never went to see nothink, nor indeed anywheres, tho' I'd come out a-purpose, but was obliged to turn back, and couldn't even get to Mrs. Frimley's for tea not that day; and the time as I did go took the bus, as is my natral way, and none of your pokin' under ground, as I'd rather go by tramway, but the Underground, like them Corporation Stores, it tries for to run everythink off the road as is in the same line, and 'ave got a Hact of Parlymint as nothink shan't run over them, nor yet against 'em.

I'm sure I wish as we could get a Hact of Parlymint somethink like it to purtect us agin them bicycles, as comes on you like a flash of lightning, with nothink but a little bell to warn you, as might be muffins; and tho' I must say as I likes to see them young fellers, as is a many fine-limbed lads, a-showin' of their strength, yet it aint pleasant to be 'owled at, and called a bloomin' old fool, with wuss than that, cos you can't get out of the way quick enuf; and to think of two thousan of 'em bein' let loose at once, as they was Whit Monday, in Bushey Park; as shows as there aint no race in this world as is arf so dangerous as them 'uman races. Not but wot there's danger everywhere, and it's a wonder as we can sleep in our beds when we think wot's a-'angin' over us constant, as is death and distraction at every turn. Not as ever

I let them things bother me, cos in course we all did ought to look sich things steady in the face, as we knows must come 'ome to us some day; but as to goin' on like Mr. Skinley, I wouldn't 'ave life on the terms, for he's always a-fancyin' as he's got a new disorder set in, and the life as he leads 'is poor dear wife, 'avin' 'er up in the middle of the night, with the children all round 'im, a-takin' leaf of 'em tender. So, one night when he were took that bad, 'is wife sent over for me, and when I got in the room he was a-layin' on 'is bed, with enuf fissic bottles about 'im to 'ave killed a 'orse.

"Ah!" he says, "Mrs. Brown, I'm a-goin'."

I says, "Where to?"

"Oh," he says, "don't speak like that to a dyin' man."

I says, "You're worth a good many dead uns."

"Oh," says 'is wife, "'is sufferin's is orful."

So I give a look at 'im. I says, "Why, you're a wonderful colour to be dyin'." I says, "Wot's the matter?"

"Oh!" he says, "escruceratin' torments in my left side, jest above my 'ip, as if somethink were a-eatin' into my flesh. I felt it jest now, when a-dozin'; in fact, it waked me up."

I says, "Wotever can it be? Let's look."

"Oh!" he says, "I daren't move, the agony is so great, and seems to tear my werry flesh."

I says, "Preaps you're a-layin' on somethink."

He says to 'is wife, "Send that 'orful old woman away, and let me die in peace."

I says, "I may be both orful and old, but I aint a fool. Nonsense about dyin'; you're in full 'ealth. Wot 'ave you been eatin?"

He give a groan. And I see there was oyster-shells on a dish, with a empty stout bottle close agin the bed.

I says, "Preaps the stout 'ave been too 'eavy for you."

He give another groan, and then up he starts, and says, "I can't bear it no longer," and puts 'is 'and to the place where the pain was; and if he didn't bring out one of them short corkscrews, as 'ad been and slipped into the bed, as he'd been a-layin' on, and 'ad worked into 'is flesh, tho' nothink more in the way of a wound than a scratch as he'd give 'isself in turnin'.

He never could bear the sight of me no more, for I always asked 'im where he'd got the cork-screw now. A nasty idle selfish old beast, as lived on 'is family, for 'is three dorters went out a-teachin', and 'is wife slaved 'er 'art out with a little school, with 'im a-layin' in bed all day, or goin' out in a bath chair, and 'avin' plovers' eggs and spring chickens, with sparrergrass and young peas; at sich a price, and them poor things as worked 'ard

for the money, with nothin' but a scrap of cold meat or a egg with their tea, as was as good as gold; but the son he'd got sick on it, and took to the sea, and don't never come 'ome, cos he can't stand 'is father's ways, nor yet seein' 'is mother and sisters that put upon, as only gets abuse from that man, as is either snivellin' or swearin' all the time. But as to them Stores, one party did put me out at that there meetin', as said as them as 'ad penshuns under Government didn't ought to be allowed to do no work, for to eke out the trifle as they'd got into a livin'. I says to Brown, "Mussy on us, wotever does the noodle mean, he must be off 'is chump," as the sayin' is.

"Oh!" say Brown, "wot's the use of talkin' about sich a party."

I says, "A deal of use, and I only wish as I 'ad 'im 'ere to talk to, as is preaps a well-meanin' duffer, one of them as gets somethink in their 'eads, and then can't get it out no more; but does he mean to say if I've got a shillin' a day for a penshun, I must starve on it, and not be allowed to make somethink extra; or does he mean to say as if I've got a employment from ten till four, like Mrs. Frimley's brother-in-law, at the seat of war, as 'ave lost a arm, as don't perwent 'is bein' a messenger, mustn't he do nothink after 'ours, like Mr. Welby, as were in the Custom 'Ouse, and made a pretty penny out of waitin' at gentle-

men's 'ouses, and used to pick up a good deal as parties let drop in the way of news, let alone the odd tips as he got; and 'ave told me 'imself as there was gentlemen in that office as made more by employin' their after time than they ever did in the office," as some on 'em did used to rite for the papers, and wot they didn't know they made a guess at, and some on 'em went to the play of a night, not to be amused, but for to put down all as them play actors said; and one young gent as I knowed, for he lodged with Mrs. Padwick, he did used to rite about them plays, and said as they was acted lovely, not as he meant it, cos he often told 'er over makin' 'is breakfast, as he'd 'ad a 'orrid bore over it, but he were that good natured as he said it were all lovely in the papers, cos it made them play actors feel 'appy; tho' I must say as I considers that rough on the public, poor things. But as to sayin' as that young gentleman were to be kep' idle altogether cos he 'ad 'is reglar office 'ours, why, it's downright rubbish. But a many of them as come and give their evidences about them Stores didn't seem to know no more about them, but that they was a-'urtin' the shops, as I'm sure some on 'em 'ave 'ad their turn as can afford to drive out in their pheatons like lords and ladies, cos in course money makes money, and any man as is rich enough for to employ three or four 'undred men and womin in

'is busyness, and can make four or five shillins a day out of the work of each on 'em, he must make money, and in course Stores cuts down espences as well as profits, and that's 'ow the money is made; and as Brown were a-sayin, "A man with money at 'is back can buy up the stock of a man as 'ave failed cheap and sell it at a good profit, and yet 'ave no bogus sale," as the Merrykin's calls it, "neither." Why, in good old times, when a man lived over 'is shop, he was able to do well on small profits, but if he must 'ave a villa and 'is carridge, and 'is wife dressed out along with 'is children, and like lords and ladies on the spree, why, he must make a large profit; and as to talk of i' terferin' with the way as parties does their busyness, it's quite rediculus; and they may 'ave meetin's as often as Quakers, but they wont never be able to put down Stores, escept by undersellin' 'em, as isn't ways as I 'olds with, as don't seem like fair play, as is a jewel all the world over, as the sayin' is. I should like to know who is a-goin' to interfere, tho' I'm sure as there's lots of things a-goin' on at this werry moment as somebody did ought to look into things, for as to Parlymint, it's somethink like boardin' schools did used to be, with nothink but holidays; not as it matters much, for when they are at work they never seems to do no good. Brown says it's jest the same as the Westry, and never shan't forget 'im a-comin' in Easter time,

arter the meetin' about electin' churchwardens, as they was a-fightin' like mad over, cos one was 'igh church and the other was low, and one wanted candlesticks and the other didn't, and 'ad rote to the Bishop, as 'ad rote back as they'd better not quarrel, as wasn't Christian. So I says to Brown, "Why ever don't Parlymint settle sich things, as would be makin' of theirselves useful, and not go on night after night a-settin' up that late to talk rubbish about nothink."

"Oh!" says Brown, "that's wot them pollytishuns likes to do, jest meet and 'ave all their fine speeches, as they've rote out clear afore'and, to be put in the papers, and a deal of good done arter all, as werry few ever reads 'em."

"Well," I says, "wot's Parlymint got to do with religion? Why can't the parsins settle it, for I went down to Croydin last year to see poor Mrs. Mallins, as 'ave lost the use of 'er lower lim's thro' roomatics, and the place was reglar swarmin' with parsins and their good ladies, all dressed out that lovely, and they was met to settle all them pints, leastways so said parties as lived down there, as 'ad throwed their 'ouses opin to 'em for lunches and dinners, as was all smiles; but 'eard as in the end nothink weren't done, and they all went 'ome agin."

Says Brown, "There aint much for 'em to do,

cos if all the parsins, with the archbishop at their 'eads, was to meet, and say as people was to believe anythink in partikler, they'd be larfed at; cos in course Protestints 'olds as everyone is to believe wot they likes."

"Well, then," I say, "wot's the use of parsins and bishops?"

"Why," says Brown, "it's respectable to go to church, and a decent way of gettin' a-livin' for the parsins, that's wot it is, as won't last much longer; cos every day parties is a-goin' all their own different ways, as is wot bein' Protestint means; cos if you was to ask the Archbishop or the Queen, as is the 'ead of the church, wot you did ought to believe they'd both say, Wotever you likes; you pays your money and you takes your choice. So it is, as some follers Mekonikey, with 'is candles and 'igh jinks, and others goes arter Spurgin and the City Temple, where that nice mishunary come and told 'em all about the Zulus, as 'ad better go back; then there's a good many, like Gladstin, goes with 'em all, leastways that's the way with 'em as can pay for their religion; but as for the poor lost retches as you sees about the streets, they goes nowhere, unless it's some few as goes where there's anythink to be got by goin'."

"Ah!" I says, "that's jest where it is; wot with idleness and wice a-growin' up, and these

strikes a-goin' on, an' edication as teaches people as they ain't got no better to look up to, but all equal like 'Merryker, and nobody didn't ought to respect nobody, and only look out for number one, and says wot fools parties must be for to go to be sojers and sailors, and that queen and country is all 'umbug."

"Ah!" says Brown, "it's all a matter of money, for them as can pay will always be able to get plenty of them as likes fightin' to pertect 'em, and they'll all fight, cos fightin', like 'untin', comes nat'ral to men, tho' some talk agin standin' armies."

"Yes," I says, "but that must end in massacreein' millions, the same as the Rooshins and the Turks, tho' that's a good riddance, I should say, if they'd take and wipe each other out."

"Yes," says Brown, "if it would stop there, but it won't; there'll be a row all over the shop; cos now as they've got this 'ere republic in France, Italy 'll be a-tryin' of it on, cos they've only got this 'ere son of Wictor Manyel for a makeshift; as old Grabidaldi 'll kick out the fust time as he gits the chance, Pope and all, and then they'll foller soot all over in Spain, and then we've got to see wot old Beastmark will do; cos he's got the game in 'is 'ands, and may mean to make 'isself president of all Germiny, with the rest of Europe throwed in."

I says, "Don't go on a-talkin' like that, Brown, don't; you quite gives me the jumps. You're enuf

to give anyone the creeps and the cold shudders jest afore goin' to bed. Why, wotever will become of Queen Wictorier?"

"Oh! she's right enuf, tho' them as comes arter will get it rough; and it's all the fault of them as 'ave been incouragin' riverlutions all over the place, and stood by quiet and see all that there rong and robbery a-goin' on, with that there King of Italy lettin' Grabidaldi go on a-robbin' right and left, as long as it suited 'im, and then he took and put 'im down, and that there Lewy Napoleon was a-tryin' to grab everythink, till Beastmark he come and punched 'is 'ead, and so he will agin, for if them French aint quiet they'll get it 'otter than ever they did next time.

In course it comes 'ard on them shopkeepers, as 'ave got them 'eavy rents to pay, as is bein' rose constant, for them Stores do cut 'em out with their customers; but if it don't anser them shops' purposes to pay them 'igh rents, they must do as the farmers is a-doin' all over the place, chuck it, as the sayin' is; but as to knowin' wot to believe, I'm sure I don't, and is enuf to drive Queen Wictorier off 'er royal senses, the way as she must be worreted with some a-sayin' as the country is a-goin' to the dogs thro' free trade, and then others gets up and says as free trade is the only thing to save us; and meanwhile there's farmers all ruined, everywhere, and a good many of the manyfacterers

too, and 'ow it's to end I can't think, and as for that there Lord Darby a-tellin' them farmers as they did ought to emigrate, I wonder 'ow he'd like it isself, as 'ave got everythink as this world can give 'im, and never knowed the want of a fiver nor nothink else, so it's easy for 'im to give adwice, but wouldn't like to see 'is property all ruined, and 'im obliged to turn out with 'is wife and children for to get a loaf in the wide, wide world, as is a cold place to be throwed on.

I'm afraid as Brown is right when he says as the money 'ave got into too few 'ands, and will some day 'ave to be shared over agin; cos in course it's werry well to talk of Jews bein' over rich, but there's a many Cristshuns as is werry like Jews, but I'm sure I don't know 'ow it's to end, no more don't Brown, but things is fishy when some parties comes to be lettin' out their 'ouses and lands at them orful prices, as others can't, not with 'ard work, get a livin', and so in the end 'as to bust. In course there must be a deal of money 'oarded somewheres about, and all as I 'opes is that it's the old story of parties grumblin' and gettin' on. But I don't like to 'ear as them rich lords speaks that unfeelin' over other people's poverty, as sounds 'ard-'arted, tho' if Stores can live at the prices as they charges, why, in course it stands to reason as shopkeepers could do the same, cos rents must be

as 'igh for Stores as for shops, and in course both buys at 'olesale prices, as shows what profits many shopkeepers must 'ave been makin' all these years thro' givin' credit. So it's no use their 'oldin' meetin's to put 'em down, they'd better all jine and undersell the Stores, as in course is difficult, but wot's sarce for the goose is sarce for the gander, as the sayin' is; tho' I must say agin as I've often said afore, and them as 'ave 'eard me can give their testimony to me, for I says, it's givin' credit as does the trick, and it strikes me forcible as Stores won't never 'old their grounds till the people is all well off, cos if you pay ready money, you must 'ave it in your pocket, and if every one 'ad it wotever would become of them as lends money, as I well remembers a old man in the name of Doxey as were a money lender, and kep' a little ile shop jest over Westminster Bridge, a 'ole of a place as you couldn't swing a cat in, as died as rich as Creases, with money all 'oarded up in the desk, and the cupboards of 'is little back parlour where he slep' and took 'is meals, and nice meals they must 'ave been, for I've 'eard as he begrudged 'isself a cup of tea and a red 'errin'. 'Ow I come to know about 'im were thro' 'im 'avin' of a dorter, as I don't know whether married or not, leastways, did not, but died, poor thing, in Lambeth Workus with 'er fust and last, as it turned out. When she come in the 'ouse wouldn't say

nothink about 'er name nor yet 'er family till when a-dyin' she told the nuss, as were Mrs. Turrill, all about 'er bein' Old Doxey's dorter, as went and told the old man, as were a reglar skinflint, and let the parish berry 'er, tho' they made 'im pay in the hend, but he wouldn't own to the child, as would 'ave been throwed on the parish, only Mrs. Turrill's dorter took to it thro' berryin' twins, and so brought it up, as was some years more juniorer than me, but lived next door but two, and 'er 'usban in the name of Spinks, he were a shoemaker and the lamplighter.

Well, Mrs. Spinks come into me one day, a-sayin' as she'd 'eard as 'er grandfather were a-dyin', and should like to go to 'im.

"Well," I says, "no doubt, and your duty, too; but," I says, "'ow about 'im?" For I knowed as he'd never owned to 'er.

She says, "I don't want nothink of 'im but my poor mother's marridge lines."

I says, "'Ow do you know he's got 'em?"

"Why," she says, "mother wrote it on a bit of paper the night as she died, and give it to Mrs. Turrill. I've got it 'ere."

So she showed me a bit of crumpled-up paper as were rote on werry faint.

"I'm a 'onest married woman, and father knows it. He's got my lines."

I says, "Wot a old wretch!"

She says, "Will you come with me and see 'im?"

I says, "That I will;" and off we set, and got there jest afore the old man died, as wasn't in 'is bed, but settin' in sich a rickety old chair in 'is back parlour. He couldn't 'ardly speak for coughin', and there was a party a-settin' by 'is side as I see were a minister. The old man were werry 'azy, and I 'eard that minister say to 'im, "You must 'ave a nuss. I'll send you one." But the old man shook 'is 'ead.

The minister he looks up when we come in, and says, "Are you friends of this poor old gentleman?"

"Well," I says, "I've knowed 'im by name many years, tho' not by sight; but this party is 'is own grandorter." Well, there wasn't no time for talkin' much, for the old man broke out in a fit of coughin' that wiolent that I says, "Mussy on us, he's a-dyin'."

His grandorter run to 'im, and knelt down beside 'im, and said, "Gran'father, I'm your poor dorter's child."

He looked at 'er confused as she took 'is 'and; he tried to speak, but he certingly did smile; and as the minister stood over 'im and said some words, he gives 'is last sigh, and was gone.

It's wonderful 'ow kind that minister was, for if it 'adn't been for 'im that poor Mrs. Spinks

wouldn't never 'ave got 'er rights, as was all that old man's money, as 'ad lots; and we found 'er mother's lines along with a list of the old man's property, as all come to 'er; and they've took a farm down in Essex, as I've been to see 'em once or twice, and always sends me a basket at Crismus; and that old man he 'adn't carried on no reglar busyness but money-lender for years, as was small sums as he lent to parties as was in trade, and run short for their wages. He was berried werry respectable, tho' nobody but me and 'is gran'dorter to foller; and the ready money as come to 'er was over three thousan' pounds, as he'd jest been and got it all in afore he was took with 'is last illness; and 'is lawyer said as he were a-goin' to sink it all in a life annuity, as they calls it, as only shows 'ow we aint always allowed to do as we likes in this world, as would 'ave been 'ard on 'is gran'child.

I must say as I don't 'old with cheap shops for givin' you good things, but in course there aint no rule without a deception in this world, and I 'ave bought cheap things as 'ave ansered the purpose. Cos it aint now-a-days as it did used to be, as parties wore their gran'mother's 'old clothes, like Queen Lizzybeth, as left three 'underd old wigs behind 'er, as was in use down to Queen Ann's time, and I 'ave 'eard say as Queen Charlotte left all 'er old clothes packed up to be sent over to Germany, as

she'd known wot it was to want a hunder garmint 'erself when a gal, as 'ad stood at the wash tub 'erself, as wasn't 'er own things, but all them crowned 'eads of Urope as 'er mother washed for, like my own dear mother, as was as proud of 'er fam'ly as ever Queen Charlotte could be, thro' bein' the Scotch perswashun, as were as proud as lucifers, as went off on 'er own box out of 'er son's 'ouse, cos she thought as he might take it into 'is 'ead as she meant to live on 'im, as 'ad jest enuf to live on 'erself; but, law bless you, she 'ad odd and ends of 'er gran'mothers, as was made of them materials as wear out they would not, and as to unpickin' 'em nobody could not, partikler a pair of stays, as was for all the world like 'avin' on a straight weskitt. Not as ever I fancies old clothes, nor yet too old beddin', as 'ad better be burnt with all that in them is, partikler when parties is like old Mrs. Grubbins, as 'ad kep' 'ouse over forty years, and never 'ad 'er blankets washed, and always dark counterpins, as is things I can't bear the sight on, no more than black petticoats and stockin's to save washin'. But, bless my 'art, things is that cheap now-a-days that some parties never 'as their stockins' washed at all, and burns their things arter one wearin' as would not stand the washtub, leastways not with a good 'onest pair of rists a-workin' at 'em; as is all soder and washin' powders now-a-days.

But as to Brown a-swearin' as I went to sleep all the time as he were a-readin' about them Stores, I think as I've proved 'im to be in herror; cos I could not 'ave knowed so much about the subjec as I do if I 'ad, as is aperient to the lowest intellex, as I've brought to bear on the subjec; and would 'ave went to the meetin' myself, for tho' I'm one to stick up for them as is tryin' to earn a crust 'onest, yet I don't 'old with none of them old-fashioned monoperlies as kep everythink tied up in their own 'ands, and wouldn't give no one else a chance; but in course these Stores will outdo theirselves, and meet their own levels, as the sayin' is, the same as them red-coat blackin' boys, as tried to keep all the others out of the line, but was sold by them Irish boys as cut in, as didn't consider it no sin to black any one's boots of a Sunday, so that's 'ow they scored over them others; but talk of payin' ready money at the Stores, nobody can tell wot did used to be paid for credit, but them as did used to deal at a tally shop, as is all done away with now, as poor Mrs. Crump were a reglar wictim to, as let lodgin's over in Walworth, when my dear mother fust married, as were, I've 'eard say, reglar eat up by the tally man, as called at 'er door every Monday mornin' and often went away without being a fardin' better off for 'is pains, and nicely she paid thro' the nose for everythink, as were a guinea for a green gingham umbreller, as bulged

out all round with a brass ring round the middle; and the price she give for calico, and even a 'ouse flannin 'arf a crown, and were sold up in the end, poor soul, thro' a loan as she got of one of them societies, as they was called, as was a nice gang. Not but wot there is parties as lends money, and takes weekly payments as deals fair, as is 'ow I once bought a bedstead myself; cos it's all werry fine to talk like my dear mother when you've got the money, and say as none of 'er children couldn't never say as they'd ever see a tally man at 'er door, but it's a great conwenience the same as the pawnbroker, as may be a friend in need at a pinch; and I'm sure my dear mother's tea-pot was for many a year a deal more oftener on a wisit to my uncle than at 'ome; but, thank goodness, that's all over, and tho' I 'ave before now lent it to friend as 'ave been in a fix, it's always come back one way or the other; but all I've got to say is there's a many as lives beyond their means on the chance of wot may turn up, and if this 'ere Store system is a-goin' to take root, why, there won't be so many false swells, and a good many more 'onest people in the world. Not as I feels in sperrits to rite about anythink, for I must say as Stores and everythink were put clean out of my 'ead when Brown come in, and told me about that poor dear young Prince bein' killed by them Zulus; it gave me that orful turn as I couldn't 'elp sheddin' tears, not for 'im so much

as is, I 'ope, out of a wicked world, and 'appy for ever, but my thoughts turned to that poor dear lady 'is mother. Well might that dear kind 'art of Queen Wictorier bleed for 'er, and I'm sure I couldn't 'ave went thro' it myself, and I 'umbly 'opes as that widdered 'art may be comforted, and come in good time to think as all is for the best. I'm glad as they speak of the comfort of 'er religion, for I'm sure she must want it all.

"Ah!" says Brown, "that she must, and no doubt it will be some satisfaction for 'er to know as there ain't a 'art 'owever 'umble, as is worth bein' called a 'art, as don't feel for 'er, and prays as she may be comforted as none in this world can comfort a poor soul as is struck down as she 'ave been."

"Yes," I says, "and if there's any even of them as don't agree with 'er, as can be brutes enuf at such a time to even think a 'arsh thought about 'er or 'ern, I don't care who they are, French, Inglish, or even Zulus, they ain't worthy the name of men, and I 'oners the beasts of the field afore 'em, as is, in my opinion, their superiors."

"All right, old gal," says Brown, as reglar broke down in readin' of 'is paper, and I see a tear in 'is eye as showed 'im a true Briton.

THE END.

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